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# **Social Inclusion and its Promotion**

**by**

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## **Declaration, Inclusion of Material from Prior Assignments**

This thesis is the candidate's own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Part of Chapter 1 builds upon a previous assignment written by the candidate about the recent history of education in the United Kingdom (Fitzgibbon, 2002).

Similarly, parts of Chapter 3 build upon previous work undertaken by the candidate exploring the field of evaluation (Fitzgibbon, 2001).

# **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ITS PROMOTION**

## **Abstract**

This research study is concerned with the concept of social inclusion, its significance, its origins, its definition and its history. It looks particularly at its development in the United Kingdom since the election of a Labour Government in 1997 and, in that context, the implementation of a Social Inclusion Strategy by a County Council referred to throughout as 'Someshire'. It offers as an example of reflective inquiry an evaluation of aspects of the implementation of the Strategy led by the Council's Education Department and some comments on the Council's own, previous, evaluation of the whole Strategy. Through this study, it engages with a range of stakeholders including schools, County Council Officers and representatives of parents and school governors in an attempt to discover what has gone well and why. It concludes with a set of recommendations for action by a range of parties who, in their different policy contexts, might wish to promote social inclusion.

Finally, this study has been written by a senior Local Education Authority Officer. This results in the emergence of two voices within it. In Chapter 1 there can be perceived the voice of the traditional researcher, attempting what Schon describes as the 'technical rationality' of traditional research. In Chapters 2, 4 and, to some extent, 5 the voice changes to that of the 'reflective practitioner' with its reliance on the ability to intuit, know-in-action, an ability derived from over thirty years working in education, principally as an educational manager.

## **Introduction**

This study is centrally concerned with developing an understanding of the concept of social inclusion and how it can be promoted. The research questions it seeks to address are not traditional ones in the sense that they rely on the gathering and analysis of empirical data. Rather they seek to address through reflective inquiry issues which have been and continue to be central to the professional life of the researcher. The research questions it seeks to address are:

- what is meant by social inclusion?
- how can it be promoted and, in particular, the role of education in this process?

In addressing these questions it is necessary to deal with a number of related issues:

- who can exclude and include (what are later referred to as the issues of agency and action)?
- where did the term originate?
- how significant is it for the current United Kingdom Government?
- how has it grown over the last three decades?
- how can it be measured?

These matters are significant for the researcher who has spent most of his professional working life as an education manager. Part of this time was as 'lead officer' for Special Educational Needs when an often fierce debate took place about whether, to what extent and how young people with special educational

needs should be included in the education system. Over this period more young people were included in so-called mainstream provision. However, at the same time more and more young people were excluded from the mainstream of society, leaving education, with less prospect of participation in it and enjoying its goods. Only relatively recently for educationalists has the concept of inclusion been broadened away from its relatively narrow original meaning to approximate to the concept of social inclusion and the contribution of education to its reduction been recognised. At the time this was happening the author was asked to become - in turn - the Head of Children's Services in his Authority's Social Services Department and the leader of the Project Team set up to help implement the Children Act 2004. The latter sets out in statute the duty of a range of agencies to ensure that all young people, inter alia, achieve and are able to participate fully in society. Working in these last two posts further stimulated the writer's interest in social inclusion and helped to confirm the focus of this thesis. This total career experience resulted in the acquisition of an unusual cross-disciplinary set of knowledge which was useful in its writing. However, it did also bring with it tensions. In particular in undertaking the reflective inquiry the author had to be constantly aware of his dual position as an 'insider' to the organisation and what that meant to him and the people he drew into the research, and his other role as an 'outside' researcher with the concomitant need for detachment and objectivity. The experience provided insights into the research questions, another step in his journey towards an understanding of social inclusion and how it might be promoted.

The argument of the thesis is set out in five chapters:



- **Chapter 1** is a review of the origins and use of the terms social inclusion and exclusion. The thread it follows in the literature is from Aristotle and Hobbes (briefly) through to its modern origins in France, into thinking in the United Kingdom and finally into the policy making of the current national Labour government. Along the way it attempts to define key concepts both as they are found in the literature and as they are used by the Labour government. It concludes that both social inclusion and exclusion are generally ill defined by those who use them. As a lead into successive chapters, it provides some notion of the extent of exclusion and wrestles with the important concept of agency in relation to exclusion. It discusses ways of measuring and combating exclusion, and highlights the significance of education in this process. The last of these issues is important in relation to both the discussion of the evaluation of Someshire County Council's first Strategy to Promote Social Inclusion and to the later case study.
  
- **Chapter 2** grounds the discussion of social inclusion in a particular setting. This Chapter sees the change of 'voice' from traditional researcher to reflective practitioner referred to in the Abstract. It relates theory to the establishment and evaluation of a County Council's strategy to combat social exclusion. It defines the context within which it was developed, describes an internal review of it and finally provides a commentary on it. It suggests there was insufficient rigour in the evaluation process. Partly for this reason it was decided to undertake a further evaluation of a part of the Education community's contribution to the implementation of the Council's strategy as part of the reflective inquiry. This can be found as Chapter 4 in this thesis.

- **Chapter 3** is concerned with research methods. It describes the methodology and research methods used in the thesis as a whole and explores the concept of reflective inquiry. Given the particular concern of this study with the evaluation of policies to promote social inclusion, it devotes some space to the concept. It starts with discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of evaluation and its relationship to research. It explores key issues in the field, including definitions, and explains why a particular model of evaluation was chosen to structure the reflective inquiry. Finally, it explains why it was decided to undertake an evaluation rather than a further piece of research. By taking this approach it was hoped to have a formative influence on future Council policy.
  
- **Chapter 4** is a reflective inquiry where the author reverts to using the 'voice' of the reflective practitioner. It drills down through the County Council's Social Inclusion Strategy to evaluate part of the Education Department's contribution to the achievement of some of its targets. It analyses the data collected in the study and offers some conclusions about the success of the measures taken to promote inclusion. It does this in an attempt to discern whether there is any causal relationship between actions taken and outcomes achieved. The findings are not in themselves the evidence on which the conclusions in Chapter 5 are based but are a further source of stimulation to professional reflection. Reference has been made earlier to the particular tensions that this piece of work raised for someone who was, as a researcher, an 'outsider', and an 'insider' to the County Council.
  
- **Chapter 5** returns to the research questions and offers some conclusions about policy and practice in relation to social inclusion. These are directed

towards national and local government and to schools. It suggests also, given the limitations in scope of this piece of work, further research that might be undertaken.

## 1. Literature Review

### Its Importance

It is perhaps worth asking at an early stage why social inclusion and exclusion are worthy of study as phenomena. This will be answered in part in the discussion of the history of the term. However, it is important to note at the earliest stage what a range of authors have seen as the moral imperative to address it. In 1994 Murray (p.iv), wrote with concern about the 'underclass' in the United States based on illegitimacy, violent crime and drop out from the labour market who were excluded from society. At the same time the UK was seeing the rapid growth of a similar group of disenfranchised citizens. This 'separation' of significant numbers from the mainstream of society was caused, Reich thought (1992 p3), by the: "centrifugal forces of the global economy which tear at the ties binding citizens together". Macmurray (1961 p128), a key influence on the thinking of the current Prime Minister, had argued for the vital importance of these ties within society, in maintaining what he saw, as had Aristotle & Hobbes before him, the 'good' of the rational life in an ordered world. Unless remedies could be found to the growth of the underclass, those excluded from society, society itself was at risk. This is not just important in itself but is to deny the value (not to be confused with ability) of each individual within it, a value which, as Sennett saw it (1988 p4), had diminished as people had withdrawn into a small number of 'intimate' relationships away from community with their fellow human beings at large. More recently Barry in Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2001 p19) regards exclusion as 'bad' because: "it violates the value of social justice ... and the value of social solidarity". The concept, therefore, of exclusion is useful as a: "new perspective on social ills ... as part of the most basic social relation – that of belonging or not



belonging to one's society" (Woodward & Kohle 2001 p2). In summary the promotion of inclusion is both a moral imperative, the promotion of a basic 'good', and a necessity if we are not to see our society disintegrate into chaos (see Riley 2003 p12). The importance of the concepts of exclusion and inclusion is that they offer a focus for work to combat a range of ills in society. They are also, as we will see later, defining concepts for the current (in April 2005) UK government.

The remainder of this section which sets out to address the research questions posed for the thesis is an attempt, through a review of the literature, to:

- trace the history of the concepts of exclusion and inclusion both globally and in the United Kingdom
- define what is meant by them
- give some notion of the extent of exclusion
- deal with the important issue of 'agency' in relation to exclusion
- offer suggestions about how exclusion might be measured and combated and
- to affirm the crucial importance of education in this process.

## History

In the literature social exclusion and inclusion are regarded as being extraordinarily difficult to define. Some of their 'slipperiness' can best be illustrated and understood by considering their origins and history. The terms social exclusion and inclusion have only recently entered the public policy dictionary. According to Silver (1994 p532) the term exclusion owes its origins to René Lenoir (1974), then minister in the Chirac Government in France (see also Brymmer (2001)). However, Giddens (2000 p104) attributes its origins not to

“third way thinkers or politicians but (to) UNESCO and EU researchers”. Others suggest a later birth for the concepts. Room (1995 p11) puts it at 1988. That their birthroots can be found in Europe are not disputed by Levitas (1998 p2) who also sees its origins in French social policy. Similarly Walker and Walker (1997 p7&8) perceive the term ‘social exclusion’ replacing ‘poverty’ in the political lexicon, thanks to the influence of the EU. It is said to represent a wider form of social disadvantage to poverty which grew out of the restructuring of economies and social policies of the 1970s. Over time the concept expanded and was clarified (but see Geddes & Bennington Eds (2001 p4) who still regard ‘exclusion’ as used in the EU as: “portmanteau word for a wide range of poverty related phenomena”). As Room (1995 p3) puts it, by the time of the launch of the third EU programme to combat poverty (1990-94) social exclusion “became fashionable terminology”. It encompassed a view that social bonds were loosening and that some members of society were cut adrift or excluded from the mainstream.

In France concern at this growing phenomenon led to the recognition of the State’s responsibility to promote social cohesion and the establishment of the Secretariat General a l’Intégration (Fragonard 1993). In its most stark form exclusion manifested itself in the conflicts and ghettoisation of the multi-racial suburbs of French cities. As Durkheim, who stressed the primacy of the community over the individual, would have seen it, exclusion served to reinforce inclusion: by excluding deviant groups society stabilised itself. However, it was not only in France and the thinking of the EU that the concept took root. By 1994 Denmark, Germany, Italy, Portugal, France and Belgium had put in place new institutions to take action against social inclusion. It also found echoes in the communitarianism of Amitai Etzioni.

In the United Kingdom the term took longer to gain currency. Away from mainland Europe the concepts of exclusion and inclusion had owed their development in the UK to the thinking of John Gray, Anthony Giddens, John Macmurray and Will Hutton. In their 'communitarian' view a stable sense of self has to be anchored in a community - such as one's family of origin, or ethnic, religious or national communities (Giddens 2000 p63). The concepts of inclusion and exclusion became politically significant only since the election of the Labour government led by Tony Blair in 1997 and the establishment of the SEU. Indeed, Levitas (1998) argues that the 'inclusive society' may have been one of the defining aims of the new government. The reasons for this are complex. In an attempt to unravel them there needs to be an understanding of the recent history of education in the United Kingdom. This offers both the context for the growth of currency of the term and, arguably, explains part of their causes.

The starting point for this mini-history, this reflection on the development of the educational firmament in the United Kingdom, is 1976. The rationale for choosing 1976 as its beginning is that the year is recognised amongst historians of education (Phillips & Furlong 2001:3, Aldrich 1996:4 and Brooke 1991:4) as a climacteric in the United Kingdom, a defining point when central government asserted its interest in education and in particular its economic purposes (Esland 1996:47). Hitherto, in Plato's terms, education had been a 'good' in itself. Now it was seen to be, in significant part, the key to and driver of economic success for the nation. The end of the 70s marks also the beginnings of the political currency of new concepts such as choice, the market and accountability. Schools in particular were to be competing against each other for pupils. The best schools, it was argued, would survive; the weak would perish. Parents would make their choices on the basis of information provided by the State about individual schools'



absolute and comparative performances. It was not, however, anticipated generally at that time that competition would lead to schools choosing some pupils and, by implication, rejecting others.

### **Social Inclusion in the United Kingdom 1976 - 2001**

James Callaghan, then prime minister, delivered what was to be a pivotal speech for education at Ruskin College, Oxford, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1976. Although a speech about an apparent 'crisis', it had its origins in a much wider set of 'turmoils' which government had had to face in the 1970s. Problems with the economy, youth unemployment, strikes and the so called 'oil crisis' all contributed to a feeling that radical action needed to be taken to deal with the ills of society. For better or worse, Callaghan managed to link the wider crisis with that perceived in education in a way which has 'stuck' over the subsequent 25 years. Since then education has been both a problem and a solution to the problems in society. Perhaps even more significantly he challenged, as prime minister of the United Kingdom, the hitherto accepted pedagogical autonomy of individual schools. He called for the development of a new consensus over education to include parents and industry alongside the traditional partners in local and central Government and in the teaching profession:

'.... parents, teachers, learned and professional bodies, representatives of higher education and both sides of industry, together with the Government, all have an important part to play in formulating and expressing the purpose of education and the standards that we need'. (Callaghan 1976)

It is interesting to note in this extract from his speech the reference to standards and the purpose of education. Callaghan, as he makes clear elsewhere in the speech, had concerns that the curriculum provided by schools did not give pupils the skills that industry needed. This, we will see later, has become an even more important issue with the globalisation of economies. He shared also some parents' anxieties about 'progressive' teaching methods and the autonomy of teachers. Part of the solution he offered to the State's economic and social problems would resonate through the next quarter century of educational reform, namely:

'[a] 'core curriculum' of basic knowledge; .... a proper national standard of performance; the role of the inspectorate in relation to national standards; and .... the need to improve relations between industry and education.'

It is tempting to see all subsequent (mainly Conservative Government) school reform as emanating from the core of Callaghan's speech. However, he himself would have been surprised by this connection and at the nature, scale and, latterly, pace of subsequent action by successive Governments (Callaghan, 1992). His own party, however, largely ignored his analysis of the issues facing the State in relation to education until very recently. Long in opposition it spent a deal of its energy arguing about the 'exclusive' effects of Tory policy. Only latterly did it pick up Callaghan's (and the Conservative Government's) themes as it strove to make itself electable. The big challenge it later faced was to marry the market place with traditional Labour Party notions of inclusivity.

The five years from 1976, despite a change of Government in 1979, seemed to herald little change. However, under Mark Carlisle's educational leadership,

Circular 10/65, requiring LEAs to adopt a policy of comprehensive schooling was abolished and in 1980 an Education Act was passed which allowed parents to express a 'preference' – not the often misquoted 'choice' which has never been offered to parents in law – for schools for their children. To support this notion of 'preference' the Government also established an Assisted Places Scheme to allow a wider spectrum of children to attend fee paying schools.

Although potentially much more radical in his views and intentions, Carlisle's successor, Keith Joseph, did not pursue significantly the theme of greater central accountability. He did abolish the Schools Council, advocated a more common curriculum framework for schools, and took greater control of teacher training through the establishment of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) but also introduced in 1985 the arguably more egalitarian GCSE in place of the GCE. Perhaps more significantly for the 'post Ruskin' agenda was the introduction of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in 1983 and the various youth training programmes with their origins not in the DES but in the Manpower Services Commission with its closer links with business. The hitherto largely unquestioned assumption that education was worthwhile in its own right was challenged for a second time (after Callaghan). Education was now to be seen as an instrumental 'good', a means of ensuring the health of the economy.

It was only with the appointment of Kenneth Baker as Secretary of State in 1986 that the Government had someone willing philosophically to take unto himself the powers which – as Callaghan had recognised – would be necessary to carry through the educational reforms envisaged, albeit "through the glass darkly", in the Ruskin speech. Thus the 1987 Tory election manifesto, informed by the



Hillgate Group's *Whose Schools* (1986), promised significant education reform. Its first product, the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) gave the Secretary of State more powers than any of his previous colleagues. At the same time as it established central control via a National Curriculum framework, it promoted competition through grant maintained status and City Technology Colleges. This combination of a strongly managing Government and the market place of 'choice' for parents proved very attractive to the majority of the electorate ever since. To a minority it was seen to result in increasing exclusion of a significant minority of pupils and families.

In 1992 the publication of "Choice and Diversity" by John Major's Government further reinforced Tory radicalism around the themes of quality, diversity, parental choice (but still, in reality, preference), autonomy and accountability. It was said at the time (*Guardian* 15.9.92 quoted in Bell 1994:31) that the right wing of his party were 'given' education, allowed to pursue its radical agenda, in exchange for dropping their opposition to Maastricht. However, this is to ignore the tradition within which Choice and Diversity sat. Almost all its themes could have their origins traced back to Callaghan's speech in 1976.

They were to be pursued by the new Conservative Government through:

- a revised National Curriculum with external testing at the end of each Key Stage;
- provision of information to enable choices of school to be made;
- freeing up schools from LEA control, allowing popular schools to grow through open enrolment;
- more delegation of resources to schools and

- giving parents a greater say on school governing bodies
- teacher education was to be reformed but above all else, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was to be established which was to hold schools accountable for their performance through a system of external, independent inspection.

All of these reforms together changed the educational landscape in the United Kingdom, perhaps forever. Relationships between local and central Government and schools were radically altered. Schools were to be the delivery mechanisms for education, LEAs the means of last resort for students with special educational needs and not much else. Central Government was to set the framework within which all of this was to happen. Increasingly also it used previously largely unused levers of control, particularly financial ones. As LEAs had to delegate more of their budgets to schools so central Government targeted resources from Whitehall to individual institutions to achieve its aims. Opposition to its reforms from LEAs and some schools led it to believe that it had to be more directive not only in its aims but also the means by which they were to be achieved.

These reforms did not occur without controversy. Famously Margaret Thatcher as prime minister had said that there was no such thing as society (attributed in Kingdom: 1992, p1 originally to Jeremy Bentham). The seventeen years of Conservative government, most of which she presided over, was premised on the notion that each individual is responsible for her destiny. The state, the argument goes, has relatively little role to play in supporting individuals and promoting equality. Indeed as Walker A & Walker C (1997 p5) put it, the Thatcher government saw inequality as an engine of enterprise. Government should be principally about putting in place the conditions to allow business and individuals



to flourish. Each person has a responsibility to support herself and should not expect intervention by the state on her behalf except at the margins. Thus, the long period of Conservative government saw a withdrawal by government from service provision and the provision of benefits and an increasing emphasis on self-reliance and the entrepreneurism of individuals. As already indicated, this new orthodoxy was not without its critics.

As far as schools were concerned, the National Curriculum was regarded as bureaucratic, led by the assessment system and criticised for undermining teacher autonomy (Kelly 1995). Others criticised the inspection system for its effect on teacher morale and even on the standards it was meant to promote (Cullingford 1999). The notions of choice and the market were also attacked. Numbers of authors (e.g. Ransom 1999 and Gewirtz et al 1995) suggested that the quasi market compounded inequalities and caused social exclusion. Middle class parents had the material resources (cars, money for bus fares) to make choices that others did not. Popular schools could, in the final outcome, choose their pupils. Those left over had no choice but to be grateful for what they were offered. The paradigm, the intention to allow parents to choose and drive change, had been - some said - all but inverted.

When New Labour were elected to Government in 1997, there was an expectation that it would reverse what some saw as the worst excesses of the long years of a Tory regime. LEAs, schools and, indeed, Labour politicians had provided vocal opposition to a range of Conservative policies which characterised its marketisation of, in particular, schools. Thus there had been some hope that grant maintained status would be abolished along with school performance league

tables. Similarly there had been an assumption that it would modify significantly, if not abolish, the inspection regime overseen by Ofsted.

The speed with which the new Government acted suggests that it had already on the shelves waiting for power and enactment a series of legislative proposals. It quickly published its proposals on education in Excellence in Schools and Green Papers on special needs (1997), lifelong learning (1998) and the future of the teaching profession (1998). The last of these proved particularly controversial. Nevertheless, as Phillips & Furlong indicate (2001 p20), within a year the new Government had published three Education Acts and in 1999 a further White Paper on post-16 education. There followed rigorous, and critics would say 'rigid', literacy and numeracy strategies and a host of initiatives to promote social inclusion, ranging from homework and breakfast clubs to Sure Start and Education Action Zones. It also reformed the National Curriculum in the Review 2000. It failed to abolish GM schools, renaming them 'foundation' and protecting for a while the budget advantages vouchsafed them by the Conservative Government, to be paid (much to the anger of community schools) from 2002 from local resources. It did, however, abolish both the Nursery Voucher and Assisted Places Schemes.

There is considerable debate in the literature on the issue of social inclusion about whether there was significant shift between the old and new Governments. Some would argue that although cloaked by the vocabulary of inclusion, New Labour's policies were almost as much about competitiveness and individualism as were the previous government's, e.g. Power & Whitty (1999) and Levitas (1998). It has thus continued to espouse many of its policies and has seen education not principally as an engine to drive social inclusion but as a means to

ensure that the country improves its economic competitiveness and that individuals can lift themselves out of poverty. On the other hand, Giddens (2000 p100ff) in his exposition of Third Way politics supports their emphasis on maximising employment possibilities as part of their welfare reforms. Taxpayers, he suggests, are not getting a sufficiently good return on their investment if they have to spend large sums on unemployment benefit which could otherwise be spent on education or health.

However, one key difference - its supporters would argue - between the last Conservative and the New Labour government was the latter's emphasis on maximising equality of opportunity (but not outcome) for its citizens. At the heart of this, they say, is a belief in social justice which underpins the notion of inclusion. Despite the similarities between the two governments in general policy direction (Phillips & Furlong 2001 p2) New Labour set in train a number of initiatives which, they argue, will promote social inclusion, whatever else they were intended to achieve.

These initiatives include:

- further development of the Single Regeneration Budget to be allocated on needs-based criteria
- establishment of the New Deal for Communities as part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal
- the programmes promoted by the 18 Policy Action Teams of the Social Exclusion Unit



as well as a range of locally-based initiatives including Health and Employment Action Zones. Against this, critics would argue New Labour has retained (too) many Conservative policies and has moved from an emphasis on "redistribution as the primary solution to economic polarisation and poverty ... and from a commitment to full employment to one of employability" (Geddes & Benington (Eds) 2001, p193).

Inclusion, the argument continues, is at the heart of the Labour Government's agenda (see House of Commons 1998p iii) and it was perhaps the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report on Truancy & School Exclusion (SEU 1998a) that catapulted social exclusion to the forefront of the education policy agenda. This theme continued into the DfEE Strategic Framework for 2002 where 'references to inclusion are pervasive' (Percy-Smith Ed 2000 p66). It is argued by supporters that it is the promotion of the inclusion of young people with special educational needs, the targeting of Sure Start resources, early years provision in socially deprived areas and the establishment of Education Action Zones and the Excellence in Cities initiative that mark out the differences between the policies of New Labour and the New Right. Some scholars would, however, dispute this and see only marginal differences between the policies of the two parties (Docking 2000 and Power & Whitty 1999).

There are then differing views of New Labour's education policies. Giddens (1998) describes them as a form of market socialism, true to the party's roots and traditional constituency, while Dougherty et al (2000) see them as 'a pragmatic, ideology-free response to the realities of pleasing a middle class electorate and the severe restraints presented by the Treasury'. Riley (2002) argues that there

are tensions between its 'inclusion' and 'standards' agendas. David Marquand (1997, p335) sees the roots of this enigma, the possibility of seeing New Labour in such different lights, in its retaining alongside radical Labour policies what he describes as "the foundational assumptions of the Thatcher counter-revolution".

It is necessary to unpick the apparent contradictions or paradox set out in the last five paragraphs. In particular key questions need to be addressed:

- does New Labour have a recognisable and unique ideology underpinned by a theoretical framework or is it, as Dougherty (2000) suggests, simply about pragmatic vote catching?
- or are New Labour's policies simply an extension of those of the Conservative Government in their expression, but, perhaps more importantly, in their intentions?

Again, it is necessary to reflect a little on fairly recent history. The 'old' Labour party had a considerable period in opposition (1979-97) in which to consider its failure to capture the imagination of the voting public. Those leading or advising the party during the latter part of that time were influenced by a number of key writers and concepts. Chronologically, perhaps, the first was Macmurray, an early influence on of the current Prime Minister. Famously, as has been noted earlier, the former Tory Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, had asserted that there was no such thing as society, merely individuals acting in their own interest. Macmurray by contrast (1961 p12, 127 and 128), had asserted both the existence and importance of the common good. Quoting Aristotle (1961 p128) and Hobbes (1961 p134) in support of his argument, Macmurray avers that:

'it is impossible to live rationally unless (this) co-operative is forthcoming. There must be a general agreement to limit the general aggressiveness in accordance with an agreed plan, and we must keep the agreement.' (1961 p135)

Adding to Macmurray's (1961) insistence on the interdependence of humanity, there came an acknowledgement in Sennett (1988) that somehow public life had become devalued by a rise in the cult of individualism. In contradiction to Thatcher, Sennett can thus say:

'The obsession with persons (as opposed to society or the public good) .... leads us to believe community is an act of mutual self disclosure and to undervalue the community relations of strangers, particularly those which occur in cities' (1988 p4).

He goes as far as to say that we have come to care only about institutions when we see personalities at work in them or embodied by them (1988 p338). He argues that we need to move to a position where we see the need to act for a common good.

Reich (1992), however, acknowledging the existence and importance of society, saw that globalisation of economies could generate 'centrifugal forces' which could tear it apart. The task of politicians was to cope with these forces and avoid them tearing at 'the ties binding citizens together' (1992 p3). He argued that solutions to job loss and the growing inequalities which would gnaw at the fabric of society included:



- provision of daycare (to support the training of single parents!)
- early years provision (to give a kick start to the poor!)
- basic skills for adults

(1992 p249)

These ideas - the reassertion of the notion of the common good and need to deal with the impact of globalisation - and indeed some of his suggested action plans form a cornerstone and a driver of New Labour policy.

However, perhaps most influential on New Labour thinking were the writings of Giddens (1994, 1998 & 2000). Like Reich and the others he is concerned at the decay of public life and the community. He recognises also the impact that globalisation and the new technology is having upon the world's citizens (2000 p40 & 163 and 1994 p4-6). In a vigorous defence of New Labour's 'third way' he asserts that it has not led to the abandonment of 'leftist values'. Rather, he says:

".... advocates of third way politics argue that far more revision is needed in social democratic doctrines to sustain those values than the old left allows" (2000 p29).

This can be taken, in part, as code meaning 'if we want to be elected to Government, to achieve our aims, we must represent those values in an acceptable way'. More importantly he appears to be saying that in the new millennium Labour must not cling to policies which no longer have relevance. It must be open-minded and find the most appropriate means, from whatever

source, to achieve its aims. In particular this might mean the restating of economic policies which have their origins in the Thatcherite revolution.

He reasserts the importance of reducing inequality and the pursuit of social justice (2000 p38) but suggests a need for movement away from what Levitas (1998) refers to as the traditional redistributionist discourse of old Labour. In its place sits a new theorem: 'no rights without responsibilities' (2000 p52). Indeed the three 'legs' of the stool of what he calls the new progressivism of Labour are:

- equal opportunity (not, as indicated earlier, of outcome, 'the egalitarianism at all costs' which he says absorbed leftists for so long).
- personal responsibility, and
- the mobilisation of citizens and communities (2000 p2).

Indeed along with communitarians such as Amitai Etzioni he goes as far as to say that individuals can only exercise their freedoms (and citizenship?) through membership of groups (2000 p88). Like Reich he sees early years provision and day care (but also child allowances) as key levers in the 'new' redistributive politics (that of opportunity) (2000:108). All of these themes can be traced in the actions of the Government since it came to power. There has been massive investment (as New Labour would term it) in daycare, early years provision and adult education.

An examination of the Government's own writings on social exclusion offer further illumination. It is clear from the preparatory work undertaken by it while in opposition that it was deeply concerned by what it saw as a deep social crisis in the UK. Mr Blair referred to this situation in his foreword to Preventing Social



Exclusion (p1), a report by the Social Exclusion Unit, the setting up of which had been one of the first tasks when it came to power in 1997. The Unit reports to the Prime Minister and works on issues relating to social exclusion which require a cross Departmental approach. It operates as a relatively small team through eighteen Policy Action Teams (PATs) and has produced a range of influential reports on a number of related themes. The need to address social exclusion is predicated on the costs of it to individuals, society and the public finances.

In the summary (p1) to Preventing Social Exclusion there is an acknowledgement of the European origins of the concept of exclusion and its novelty in British policy debate. In Chapter 1 (p1) it offers an early Government definition of social exclusion:

"a shorthand term for what happens when people or areas suffer from a combination of limited problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown".

Albeit in "shorthand", this definition bears some consideration partly because from it stems the stream of work undertaken by the Social Exclusion Unit on, for example, truancy and exclusion, basic skills support for families, rough sleeping and removing children from poverty (the government claimed to have removed one million children from poverty by 1999 and has a target to halve child poverty by 2010). It believes that by this definition approaching 1% of the population are severely affected by exclusion, almost 10% suffer significant problems and as many as a third or more are in some way at risk of exclusion (Chapter 1 p2). The causes of this situation are twofold:

- economic - the growth of the global economy, referred to earlier, a decline in traditional jobs and the growth in knowledge based industries, and
- social - an increase in the number of lone parents, the growth of family breakdowns and the polarisation of communities, the last of these typified by the development of what has been described elsewhere as 'gated or closed communities'.

Because of the global nature and causes of this phenomenon there is an acknowledgement of the need for an at least pan-European response to it (Chapter 4 p6). The Government's response to the problems it presents is on three levels (Chapter 5 p2):

- prevention
- reintegration and
- the provision of services to all at basic minimum standards

Examples of this response to these three levels are the already mentioned universal early years provision (see Bradshaw J: 2004 p83 and ODPM 2004 p4), the development of the Connexions Service and guarantees on waiting times for NHS services respectively.

In the Government's quest for inclusion there is a commitment to finding new ways of working in partnership with the voluntary, community and faith sectors. Perhaps as significant, if not more so, is the emphasis on the responsibilities of those who are excluded as well as their rights to full participation in society. This

theme is echoed in the performance management framework for Every Child Matters (Children Act 2004).

At one level New Labour's stance finds resonance in the general discussion of exclusion earlier in this section. There is an understanding of the geographical roots of the concept in Europe and that it is not the same as poverty. Its causes are complex and require a range of responses at different levels. To eradicate it requires action by individuals, communities of geography and interest and by Government. However, the Government's view of it has a number of defining characteristics. Firstly, it tends to assume that those who, it claims, are excluded wish, or ought to wish, to be included: there is no right to 'opt out' of society. Any rights are balanced by binding responsibilities. It is significant therefore that in the provisions of the Children Act 2004 one of the five desired outcomes for young people is that they contribute to society. They will receive services but also must, in a sense, engage with and make some sort of pay-back to society. This might be about 'volunteering', community action or, at its lowest level, behaving appropriately, avoiding destructive behaviour patterns. Secondly, the policy responses are largely pragmatic and action based, a view emphasised in the review of the work undertaken by the Social Inclusion Unit in December 1999 (p10 3.39). In the published report on its work the Unit is praised for its project based focus and ability to stimulate action. This approach accords with the principles of Burchardt et al (1999) who suggest that action on social exclusion needs to take place in a number of fields concurrently. Finally, and this leads to the policy response outlined above, it could be argued that the Government's definition of social exclusion is less about what social exclusion 'is' and more about what are its risk factors, that is those things e.g. low educational attainment and low income which are likely to lead to exclusion. Exposure, the Government would seem to



argue, to these risk factors is likely to deny individuals their opportunity to achieve their potential and must be dealt with (see Bradshaw et al: 2004 p48).

These risk factors were picked up in the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report Document (2001). He harked back to the 1942 Beveridge Report in which the author set out to 'slay' ignorance, squalor, want and idleness and disease. In achieving Beveridge's vision, however, the Chancellor asserts, there is a need to add the emphasis on promoting the opportunity referred to above. It is possible in the projected spending plan to see the emphasis on financial support for families, children's services, support for "parenting for life" and partnership with the voluntary and community sectors (p.iii). It is possible also to discern in the range of initiatives proposed the three levels of intervention – preventive, re-integrative and provision of basic minimum standards through e.g. the proposed Children's National Service Framework in the NHS and indeed the overall Change for Children programme.

## **Definitions**

This short history has indicated a growth in interest in social exclusion in Europe and in the United Kingdom over the last thirty years and offered an insight into the causes of that growth and some understanding of the current Government's attempts to combat it. Inevitably it has touched upon what is meant by the terms exclusion and inclusion. However, the remaining part of this chapter renews the effort to pin down the concepts of inclusion and exclusion specifically and to identify New Labour's preferred definition of them. As indicated earlier, if there is one thing that writers in the literature are agreed about it is that the term social inclusion is a 'slippery' concept. It is 'confused' and 'vague', interpreted differently

by different authors. It is important to note that although the term has wide currency, it is open to a variety of interpretations. Indeed in 1993 Wenberg & Ruano-Borbalan despaired at their inability to isolate common criteria which might be used to judge an individual's relative exclusion. Woodward & Kohle (2001 p2), agree that: "social exclusion pays the price of conceptual vagueness". It is, they suggest, too all embracing, includes too many factors and, partly as a consequence of its complexity, is difficult to combat. In such a multi-dimensional field it is difficult to establish causal relationships and decide where to pull the levers to effect change. It is perhaps for this reason the Social Exclusion Unit set up by the Government in 1997 was less concerned about the issue of definition and concentrated instead on dealing with particular manifestations of it such as street homelessness and teenage pregnancy (Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud 2001 p4).

A few examples of attempts at defining it may give an insight into the problems faced by a student in the field. Tsiakalos (Council of Europe, 1997 p30) suggests that: "social exclusion means hindering people from the absorption of social and public goods such as education etc". Geddes & Benington, Eds (2001 p4) believe that: "In a simple but potentially quite radical sense, social exclusion stands for the notion that poverty and marginalisation are (at least partially) caused by the processes of exclusion from the mainstream economy, polity and society". Burden & Hamm (in Percy-Smith Ed 2000 p 184) see social exclusion as existing: "when groups of people are unable to achieve what we viewed as normal levels of social acceptance and participation". Finally, one of the most influential writers on the subject (Room, quoted in Bergman, 1995 p25) sees it as: "multidimensional disadvantage which is of substantial deviation and which involves dissociation from the major social and occupational milieux of society".

Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that inclusion and exclusion are not about, or only about, poverty and its avoidance. Numbers of authors comment on the historical confusion between poverty and social exclusion (e.g. Geddes & Newman 2002 p1; Giddens 2000 p105) and how that confusion has started to become resolved partly, it is argued, thanks to the influence of the European Union (Council of Europe 1997 p5; Walker & Walker Eds 1997 p7). It is important, therefore, to be clear that social exclusion and inclusion are generally regarded as being multidimensional. They are also (as Room (1995) suggests) dynamic, developing but also existing over time. Thereafter it becomes more difficult to find consensus on the meaning of the terms. There are a number of different paradigms which attempt to capture their multidimensional and dynamic natures. For Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2001 p31) key to an individual's inclusion in society are four dimensions:

- the ability to buy (consumption)
- a contribution to economic or social activities (production)
- involvement in local or national political decisions (political engagement)
- engagement in the local community or communities (social interaction)

Woodward & Kohli (2001 p4) offer a similar analysis but combine 'consumption' and 'production' in what might be termed the 'economic', sitting alongside the 'political' and 'civic' spheres. These three, they suggest, make up the "portfolio of resources for well being and social participation: state, market and civil society". Part, perhaps a crucial part, of the difference between the paradigms is whether inclusion and exclusion are seen to be principally about the individual or the community in, for example, the political, economic and civic spheres. This is



important in considering whether the state can or should intervene to prevent or remedy exclusion. Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2001 p41) suggest that it is important to understand the issue of 'agency' of exclusion (i.e. self or others) to determine who can remedy it and how. Barry (2001) in the same volume (p15) suggests that it does not matter whether exclusion is voluntary or involuntary when deciding whether to do something about it. This issue of agency is returned to later. Percy-Smith (2000 p6) believes that it is, in any case, about processes largely outside the control of individuals.

In general, therefore, social exclusion and inclusion are seen to be difficult to define. However, it is possible to draw out a number of common strands from the literature. Discernible themes in the writings on the subject are that:

- they are about more than poverty
- they exist over time
- they are about access to money but also to other resources which we all take for granted as part of society e.g. participation in politics, social activities and employment.

More particularly, New Labour's shorthand definition of exclusion was provided earlier. However, for the purpose of this study the definition offered in Bradshaw et al (2004, p32), given its status as a publication by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, probably offers the best yardstick against which to judge the Government's progress on this matter:

"Social exclusion is typically defined as a process of long-term non participation in the economic, civic and social norms that integrate and govern

the society in which an individual resides. Therefore, in theory, attempts to capture the ways in which education contributes to social exclusion should seek to capture the ability of different population sub groups to participate in a number of key dimensions of social activity."

This definition seems to embrace the already referred to multifaceted nature of exclusion, its need for a context and its dynamic nature over time. As importantly, perhaps, it offers some context in which to judge the success of Someshire County Council's (New Labour led) Social Inclusion Strategy which is discussed in Chapter 4.

### **The Growth in Exclusion**

There are indications that social exclusion has grown in the UK and Europe over the past 20 years or so. For example, in the Council of Europe report of 1997 (p48) there is reference to the rising inequalities in many countries. Shaw (1994 p17) has a useful summary of the EU exclusion statistics over time. However, Geddes (in Shaw 1994 p170) suggests that the UK: "has experienced a more rapid increase in social inequality and poverty than most other EU member states, both as a result of exclusion from employment and growing differentials in income from paid employment" (see also Gaffikin & Morrissey 1994b – in Shaw bibliography). Over the period 1979-1990 the number on or below 50% of the average income in the UK rose from 9% to 24%. At the same time the share of the national income of the poorest 20% of the population fell from 10% to 6% (Oppenheim 1993 & Townsend 1994 – in Shaw bibliography). The reasons suggested for this are numerous. Principal amongst them are:



- the globalisation of the economy which has resulted in the exporting of significant numbers of lower – and some higher – paid jobs to developing countries with a combination of low-wage economies and a growing educated class. This is something which Reich has explored, expressing concern that 'American' companies' success globally may not necessarily bring benefit to American citizens or the state. Products and services are produced and delivered beyond the state's boundaries by companies which are concerned principally with profit. He argues that corporate patriotism is or should be about companies directing their thoughts and actions for the good of the American people. Globalisation, he suggests, has made the term national economy meaningless: it is in danger of doing the same to society (Reich 1992, p9: see also Room 1995 p18-19 and Geddes & Benington 2001 p15).
  
- a crisis in the country's welfare services which have been run down over time and which are unable to meet the demands of an ageing population (Room 1995 p18 and Geddes & Benington Eds 2001 p15).
  
- the partial withdrawal of the wealthiest 20% of the population from the community, a trend most graphically apparent in the growth of 'gated' housing with the protection of private security guards referred to above. More generally, as the Council of Europe has put it (1997 p16): "European societies have been gradually putting up walls around the dominant, privileged group in order to keep all misfortunes away from them".
  
- the non-engagement of people in politics and a consequent view that the state has little to offer them. Room (1995 p19) refers to the failure of the democratic

and legal system which, if operating well, can promote civic integration (see also Geddes & Benington Eds 2001 p15).

- linked to the issue of globalisation and the polarisation of wealth and poverty referred to above, wages have been kept in check for businesses to remain competitive with those in other countries.

All of this suggests that this is an issue which needs studying and, indeed, addressing. Hence New Labour's establishment of its Social Exclusion Unit and Someshire's promotion of a Social Inclusion Strategy.

### **Agency and Action**

There are at least two significant problems associated with definitions of exclusion which require further acknowledgement. Firstly there is what Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2001 p41) refer to as the issue of 'agency'. This dialectic can assume that exclusion is something which is largely 'done' to people, and, of course, this is sometimes the case. As Percy-Smith (2000 p193-194) puts it, sometimes mainstream society by the way it acts can exclude individuals and groups, not recognising their legitimate differences, with what she perceives as a "hint of social cleansing". Sometimes, however, people choose to exclude themselves. They are quite happy not to be part of the mainstream, whatever that may be, and to live in an alternative culture with perhaps different norms to others. Examples of this may be different ethnic groups and geographical communities (rural or urban) who do not see or seek common ground with other communities. The difficulty with all of this is in determining with any degree of certainty what the "excluee's" views on this matter really are. It may be, for example, that she or he

will ever lack of interest in 'inclusion' because she or he believes that it is not a practical proposition rather than out of any lack of interest in it.

Secondly the analysis does not lead easily to the development of an agenda for action. On one level there is no certainty that the 'causes' identified are the real and only ones (see Bradshaw et al: 2004 p6). As Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2001 p8) say:

"Given the complexity of influences on individuals, it is hard to make sense of the term cause in the context of social exclusion at all".

On the other hand, the causes themselves are so large, so daunting, that it is possible to become paralysed by them, like the rabbit caught in the car's headlamps, and feel that there is nothing to do but to sit there and wait for the vehicle to hit you.

More helpfully, as a way to break out of this paralysis, Room (1995 p120) and Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud suggest that it is more helpful to talk about "factors associated with social exclusion" rather than causes of it. Previous authors (Rahman et al 2000), they suggest, have confused causes/risk factors with outcomes such as consumption and non-involvement in civic life. Room's analysis encompasses, not surprisingly, poor education, limited work experience, marital status, family size and race or ethnic origin. Some of these at least it is possible to do something about either providing a direct remedy or offering a compensatory measure. A weakness with the list provided by Room is that it may be misunderstood. Room is not saying that if you are black and a single parent of five children that you (and they) will be excluded. It is possible for people in such



circumstances to be as fully included as they choose to be. Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud drill down even further into the concept of factors associated with exclusion. They would include poor basic skills, so-called softer skills – personal qualities – school attendance, disability, mental breakdown and offending. Above all, however, they stress the significance of educational failure (2001 p178) to the extent that they are tempted to describe it as a cause of exclusion rather than an associated risk factor (see also Bradshaw et al: 2004, p32). They do draw back from this in acknowledging that: “factors beyond school remain dominant in explaining the differences in pupil performance” (p183). Whatever the range of risk factors identified, Burchardt et al 1999 emphasize the need to take action on a number of fronts to counteract them.

It is within this pragmatic camp of those who would wish to deal with associated or risk factors related to exclusion that New Labour, both nationally and locally, would seem to sit.

### **Measuring Social Exclusion and Combating It**

Given the difficulty of pinning down what is meant by exclusion and inclusion and the thorny issue of agency, it is not surprising that there are difficulties in both measuring them and in suggesting methods of addressing them (see Whitty 2000, p6). As far as measuring them is concerned, most authors have taken refuge in measuring (easy) proxies such as poverty. There is also, as suggested earlier, a problem in measuring cause and effect in any social intervention. Sanderson (in Percy-Smith Ed 2000) argues that much evaluation has been about closing the accountability loop, with an emphasis on measuring whatever outcomes can be measured (p216). He and Room (1993 p233) would argue that this ignores

qualitative effects and the complexities and interdependencies of a potentially large range of factors associated with exclusion (see also Howarth et al 1998 - Percy-Smith bibliography). As Pawson & Tilly suggest (1997 pp74-77) outcomes need to take into account both the mechanism used to achieve them and the context within which they have been achieved. It may be also, as Walker (in Room 1995 pp103-4) suggests, that effects of initiatives may only be apparent over time. Some would argue that as least important as measuring outcomes is determining how and why something has had an impact on an outcome so that its effect may be more readily replicated. This has been the increasing emphasis in government, trying to secure evidence of 'what works'. The Scottish Social Inclusion Network (1999) has, for example, stressed the need to understand: "how and why success is achieved or not" and less about simple measurement and accountability (see also LGIU 2002 p6 and Percy-Smith Ed 2000 p 228). For this reason the case study undertaken as a part of this thesis attempts to look at traditional outcome measures but also the reasons for success and failure in achieving them.

In summary, attempts to address exclusion have fallen broadly into three camps. There are those who would wish:

- to deal with it as if it were synonymous with poverty as something which can be measured and in relation to which there are some identifiable levers to pull. Woodward & Kohli (2001 p3) argue that as poverty is: "the one criterion by which exclusion manifests itself most clearly and which should, therefore, be the primary target of remedial intervention". This is an historical European, perhaps EU, view of exclusion but seems to ignore the levels of complexity

associated with it and which most other authors see the need to get to grips with.

- to deal with it at the micro level, addressing individual situations or aspects of exclusion as necessary. This is an approach increasingly favoured in the UK. Both Percy-Smith (2000 p224) and Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2001 p200) argue for a range of interventions at the micro level around school exclusion, health, focussing on looked-after children and engagement of parents in their children's learning, adult education and early intervention. It is through addressing the micro issues that impact will be had on the 'macro'. Although this may appear to be a modern 'remedy' to the ills of social exclusion, it can be found in Reich (p249) writing in 1992 who with Giddens (2000) seems to have anticipated the current government's programmes, particularly in relation to early intervention.
- to argue that if it were possible to ensure that everybody had a 'good' education everything else would fall into place. For good or ill there is a heavy emphasis in the literature on the importance of education in combating exclusion (see Bradshaw et al: 2004, p14). The Council of Europe (1997 p31) suggests that: "Education is a point of decisive importance" in this respect. Hills, Le Grand & Piachaud (2002 p11), as indicated earlier, are prepared to abandon their espousal of 'risk factors' to say that there is growing evidence of a causal connection between poor education and social exclusion. Sargeant et al 1997 & Kennedy 1997 argue particularly for the crucial importance of good early years provision. Indeed Kennedy sees learning (1997 p4) as 'a weapon against poverty'. Percy-Smith (2000 p61) also sees a strong correlation between low levels of attainment and unemployment. Room (1995 p7) saw the



need to look at the relationship between education and disadvantage and, even earlier, Reich (1995 p205) had identified that: "the widening income gap is closely related to the level of education'. Finally Robinson & Openheim (in Hills, Le Grand & Piauchaud 2001 p179) suggest that:

"possession of five or more low grade GCSEs significantly reduces the chances of exclusion post-16. Possession of one or more higher grade GCSEs has a further positive effect".

There is also a debate to be had about the balance between preventive measures and 'crisis' interventions. Increasingly, it seems, as will have been apparent from earlier paragraphs, there is emphasis amongst thinkers but also in government on prevention (Giddens 2000 p108). This has manifested itself most recently in the Every Child Matters agenda where there is a consistent exhortation for Local Education Authorities and others to develop preventative services.

Given the focus of the later case study, the emphasis on both the importance of education and on prevention has a particular resonance. Equally important is the suggestion that better results will be achieved through partnerships. The particular complexity surrounding exclusion and the range of fields in which it may be necessary to intervene make it necessary, it is suggested, to work with a range of partners. However, Geddes & Benington (2001 p13) suggest it is not only partnership between statutory agencies which is important but also the engagement of the community as a whole in resolving its problems. This concept of partnership in pursuit of inclusion seems to have found its apotheosis in the promotion of Trusts enshrined in the Children Act 2004. Within these new partnerships Local Education Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Youth Offending

Services and a wide range of other organisations are expected to come together in support of achieving five broad outcomes for children and young people. At all levels of the performance management framework families are expected to contribute to that achievement.

The issues of definition, agency and the combating of social inclusion are returned to in Chapter 5. The next Chapter explores how one County Council established, implemented and evaluated a strategy to combat social exclusion. It will be argued that the County Council's overall evaluation of its strategy was flawed. This will be followed up in Chapter 4 by a critical analysis of the Education Department's contribution to its success (or otherwise), based upon a recently completed case study. What is meant by evaluation and the methodology used in undertaking this study are set out in Chapter 3.

## **2. An Evaluation of Someshire County Council's First Strategy to Promote Social Inclusion**

### **Background**

The purpose of this section of the thesis is to consider the establishment and evaluation of the Council's overall Strategy to support Social Inclusion. As already indicated, this Chapter marks a change in 'voice' by the writer from researcher to reflective practitioner. It includes a commentary on the evaluation itself. A later section will deal in more depth with, and evaluate, the contribution of the Education Service to the Strategy.

In the autumn of 2000 Someshire County Council issued a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent:

"We acknowledge that vulnerable individuals and groups of people can be excluded from the society in which we live. Such exclusion can take many forms and more commonly is associated with barriers to, or inaccessibility of, services provided by organisations such as the County Council. We are committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure that our policies, plans and practices are inclusive to all within our society."

This in itself was an important landmark in the Council's journey towards the production of its first Strategy to promote Social Inclusion. At the time it was led by a Labour led minority administration. Despite not having an overall majority of seats, the Labour group had established a single party Cabinet without the explicit support of either of the other two major parties. This might have been regarded



as a foolhardy, impractical and potentially short-lived strategy in many Council areas. Concessions which might have to be made on policy issues to either the Liberal Democrats, the Conservatives or, indeed, the small Independent group could have led to the Cabinet's swift demise. However, in Someshire the decision to go it alone was generally less risky than it may have appeared to be at first sight. For most of its hundred plus years of existence the Council had been Conservative led. This monopoly was first broken in 1990 when the Labour party took control. In the following years leading up to the new millennium the balance of power swung back and forth between Labour, the Conservatives and more, or less, formal alliances between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. In this environment where power could be won or lost with the shift between parties of only a handful of wards there was the potential for great instability in the government of the County and general lack of continuity of policy. This was avoided for at least three reasons:

- The three main parties were peopled and, indeed, led by politicians of good sense who were prepared to seek common ground for the benefit of Someshire residents. It helped also that, by and large, they also respected and liked each other.
- The political leaders were advised by a skilful cadre of officers who were always willing and able to help them both identify that common ground and achieve high standards of governance and service delivery. Two successful LEA inspections by Ofsted, achievement of two stars by Children's Social Services and two very positive Comprehensive Performance Assessments support this view, the latest resulting in a judgement of 'excellence' for the County Council and three stars for the LEA.

- Perhaps more significantly - and this may be a matter of either cause or effect - they were not by nature extremists. They tended to have philosophically a deal of common ground. In public, particularly with the press present, they were willing to challenge each other vigorously. In private they were able to find relatively easy agreement on most issues. For example, under both Conservative and Labour central governments all parties were able to unite in support of funding campaigns and to oppose what they regarded as the most extreme examples of their policies (e.g. Grant Maintained schools and erosion of local government powers).

This might give an impression of cosy middle-England where compromise could be equated with inaction or at least avoidance of difficult decisions. However, it was during this period, for example, that the Council completed a radical and contentious programme of school reorganisation and outsourced significant parts of its service provision.

Nevertheless, even in this context the decision to establish a strategy to promote social inclusion was potentially a difficult one. As has been indicated earlier, the concepts of inclusion and exclusion had their origins in France. A significant part of the drive to promote them had come from Europe from a European Union which was not universally popular with all parties. It has been argued earlier that they were defining concepts for the New Labour government. It had established as one of its first initiatives in power a Social Exclusion Unit. The work of a number of its Policy Advisory Teams (PATs) focussed their efforts on issues and in localities which might be regarded as 'traditional' Labour. While not neglecting the issues, for example, of rural exclusion which might have found resonance in

Conservative hearts they appeared to be of a second order. There was also potentially at least a local issue, a local hazard which had to be dealt with. There had recently been elected to the Council for the first time a former Director of Social Services from a nearby metropolitan authority. He brought to the Labour group a freshness but also a relative directness and radicalism with which it was unused to dealing. Against this as it has been suggested above the Council was blessed with officers who would be able to help steer through the development of this strategy. They had, after all, helped to develop and implement other equally contentious policies and strategies on e.g. special educational needs and equal opportunities.

However, there was one aspect of the Council's workings which it had found particularly knotty. Partnership working both within and outside the Council had tested its skills to the full. Relationships with the Districts and Boroughs over, for example, community safety had proven difficult as had the challenges provided by the Drug Action Team which it led. There were strong exceptions to this both in particular localities and within particular partnerships (the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, in its links with Connexions) but the Council was not well set either constitutionally (i.e. in terms of predispositions) or by reason of experience to deal with this thorny partnership issue. Finally, it should be added that the Council was not organised structurally in a way which naturally supported partnership working. Over the previous decade a number of authorities had reorganised themselves away from the traditional fiefdoms, the baronies dominated by strong single service departments. They had developed directorates with cross service leaders charged with corporate responsibilities to deal with what Stewart and others called the 'wicked' issues of society, the solutions to which required co-operation by a number of organisations or



agencies. Someshire had remained in the face of these challenges, largely, a traditionally structured authority with a number of long serving Chiefs with single service responsibilities. From time to time Chief Officers took on locality responsibilities (for a District or Borough area) or lead for a particular theme (e.g. racism) but generally they saw themselves primarily as the champions of their professional domains. It speaks volumes for the quality of the Chief Officers that the Council functioned well (judged by external evaluations) in the face of these challenges.

### **The Review**

It was then within this context that the Council established a Cabinet portfolio which included responsibility for social inclusion, with a view to establishing a social inclusion strategy. After the publication of the Statement of Intent referred to earlier there followed during the winter of 2000 and 2001 a series of workshops which were to turn the Statement into a Strategy. They were unusual at that stage of Someshire's political history in that they involved side-by-side both elected members and officers. The approach used, led by an external consultant, involved a methodology known as results-based-decision-making. This was meant to be driven by the set of results to be achieved by the strategy rather than what was happening or planned to happen at that time. In a sense the Strategy was to be developed from first principles, almost from a 'tabula rasa'. As indicated earlier, it will be necessary to return to this issue in discussing in a subsequent section the contribution of the Education Service to the achievement of the Strategy. In the meantime the Council's Social Inclusion priorities were defined through this process as:

1. More Jobs
2. Less Crime
3. Better Health and Reduced Health Inequalities
4. Improved Educational Achievement
5. Better Places to live, including accommodation and environment
6. Active Communities
7. The County Council as an Inclusive Model itself (Social Inclusion Strategy 2001 p5)

They were supported by three underlying principles:

1. That the Strategy should aim to achieve improvement for all
2. Improvement should be fastest for the most deprived
3. To facilitate this there should be better access to services overall (Social Inclusion Strategy p5)

The Strategy was approved by the Council's Cabinet in March 2001 and launched in the May. Action Plans were developed around the key result areas of:

- Ensuring better quality jobs
- Reducing levels of alcohol and drug misuse by young people
- Promoting "No Smoking" policies
- Promoting Healthier Someshire and Healthier Schools initiatives, including a focus on healthy diets
- Reducing the number of accidents through falls
- Reducing the numbers of school exclusions and levels of non-attendance and increasing the availability of nursery education and parenting support

- Improving the accessibility of services for rural communities
- Implementing better consultation and communication mechanisms through corporate strategies.

The Strategy contained no definitions of inclusion or exclusion. The nearest thing to a definition of either can be found in the Statement of Intent which talks of 'barriers to or inaccessibility of services'.

The implementation of the Strategy was overseen by a Social Inclusion Corporate Reference Group led by the Council's Clerk and Assistant Chief Executive. Its membership comprised senior officers from each of the Council's Departments and it met on some six occasions. Its agenda allowed for discussion of a range of topics. However, it was charged principally with ensuring the implementation of the Strategy and, in turn, its review. The review was an internal process led by the officer in the Chief Executive's Department responsible for Social Inclusion. Interim reports were presented to Employment & Inclusion Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April and November 2002. Its final report focussed on the aims, objectives and progress against the seven priorities of the Strategy adumbrated above. In addition it aimed to produce:

- a definition of 'deprivation' fit for the purposes of the Council
- a list of priorities for the future where the Council could have most influence
- a list of social exclusion 'hotspots by theme, location and County Council activity and by levels of deprivation'
- a quantification of the current levels of Council resourcing around the seven priorities



- a map of current social inclusion initiatives under the seven priority areas to identify opportunities for partners inside and outside the Council to join up.

The evaluation took place over the period 6<sup>th</sup> January 2003 to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2003. Its broad findings were that while there had been some success with the Strategy: "it was fragmented and not as geographically focussed or as corporately co-ordinated as originally hoped" (Social Inclusion Strategy Review (SISR), Section 2).

There was a need to achieve more local targeting and more corporate co-ordination with a greater emphasis on partnership working. It was agreed by Cabinet in December 2002 that in future the Strategy should focus on two of the original priorities.

- "Active Communities – with its emphasis of community capacity building and enabling the communities to start helping themselves" and
- "The County Council as an Inclusive Model – delivering improved corporate co-ordination and helping to achieve social inclusion within our own internal work" (SISR, Section 2).

It agreed also on:

- a list of 'hotspots' to target action in the County
- the need to identify key performance indicators and targets for social inclusion

- the need to test out the impact of the Strategy on the 'most deprived' and offered a definition of deprivation. ('The factors compounding a person's ability to access employment opportunities, services and information')
- the need to map current activities promoting inclusion to identify further opportunities for joined up action
- the need to qualify activity undertaken in support of inclusion.

An initial action plan was produced for consideration by the Social Inclusion Corporate Reference Group which it has yet to consider. This could include external validation of its work against the criteria in 'How Local Authorities Can Make a Difference', published by the Local Authorities Social Exclusion Network. However, perhaps the most significant conclusion of the Review is that the Strategy was not sustainable as it has too much overlap with a range of other initiatives e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships, Equalities Standards and discretionary grants to the five Someshire District and Borough Areas, a County Council initiative. It concluded that the Strategy should be subsumed under the Supporting Communities banner and led by the County's portfolio holder for Supporting Communities previously responsible for Social Inclusion.

### **Commentary**

It is not a prime purpose of this study to evaluate the County's review of its Social Inclusion Strategy. In a sense the review is no more than part of the context in which the evaluation of the Education Service's contribution to the Strategy will sit. However, it is impossible to pass over it without comment just because it is the context for the evaluative study. By the definition offered later in this study the review itself could be regarded as an evaluation because:

- "it involves the collection of information
- it (usually) relates to specific programmes or projects and their aims
- its purpose is to enable judgements to be made about the achievements of the aims
- these judgements are intended to inform action in relation to the programmes or projects
- there is a timeframe involved, either during the life of the subject of the evaluation, at its end or both"

Its purposes could have been formative (to allow passage on to the next stage of the project), to gauge impact (for similar purposes to a formative evaluation) or could be about programme monitoring (see Evaluation Research Society 1980). It could in Suchman's (1967) terms be any one of 'eyewash', 'whitewash', 'submarine', 'positive' or 'postponement'. In terms of models its purpose appears to be about systems analysis or about discrepancy measurement (Robson 1997, p176).

It is perhaps on the very issue of clarity of purpose that the problems with the review seem to have started. It seems to fall down on a number of counts. However, it is important, before moving on, to emphasise that any apparent criticisms of the review are not intended to be a reflection on the person charged with its production. This is rather a general observation on the way that reviews are undertaken in local government and perhaps the public sector generally (see Riley & Rustique Forrester, 2002 p92 for reflections on the 'add-on' nature of evaluation). This is perhaps most obviously evidenced by the fact that the officer charged with undertaking the review took it on:



- without additional assistance on top of her 'day job'
- was provided with no advice on how to undertake an evaluation
- and was given a timescale for the work of less than three months

Nevertheless, within this context the review is problematic for a number of reasons:

- There is no reflection in it of the personal, here professional, position of someone evaluating their own work. At the very least there should have been an acknowledgement of the potential conflict of interest this entailed.
- There is no description of the methods used for collecting the evidence or a discussion of why they were used. Its rationale appears not to have been thoroughly thought through. This is evidenced by the 'returns' received from the various participants which were very different in scope and level and did not allow reasonable collation or comparison. This was in large part because the reviewer did not specify a framework for the collection of evidence about the success of the various initiatives. In essence it was almost impossible to analyse the data provided in any defensible way and come to any overall conclusions.
- There was no evidence either of trialling the methodology.
- Perhaps for these reasons no detailed analysis or conclusions are offered other than those set out above which are not supported by evidence.

- Perhaps more importantly it did not offer any view about how or why parts of the Strategy had been more or less successful. In a sense what was missing from the Council's review of its Strategy was what Mohr (1995 p1) and Riley & Rustique Forrester (2002 p92) saw as being at the heart of impact analysis:

"let us take the term impact analysis to mean determining the extent to which one set of directed human activities (x) affected the state of some objects or phenomena (y, ...y2) and - at least sometimes - determining also why the effects were as small or large as they turned out to be".

- As a result it is very difficult to discern how the review led to the conclusions it reached. It may be that there is some evidence which is not presented in the written review and which may have been presented orally. If this is so, there is no reference to this in any of the minutes of the Employment & Inclusion Overview & Scrutiny Committee or the Social Inclusion Corporate Reference Group, the 'relevant' meetings
- In summary the review has failed to adhere to either the Guiding Principles or the Utility Standards approved by the American Evaluation Society. It might have been sensible in these circumstances to have taken Robson's advice (1999 p180):

"Evaluations are things to avoid unless you have a good chance of doing them properly"

and not to have undertaken the review.

Despite the shortcomings in its evaluation of the Strategy the Council clearly decided that it had sufficient evidence to move on to the next phase of its development, albeit one subsumed under the Supporting Communities banner.

### **Evaluation of the Contribution of the Education Service to the Social Inclusion Strategy**

It has been suggested above that the methods for collecting data about the implementation of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy were flawed. The process seems to have elicited very different responses from different Departments. Some simply produced details of their high level performance against the original targets in the Strategy. Others produced lists of projects which they believed supported the Strategy. There was also a range of responses encompassing and between these approaches. The Education Department response was in the first of these categories. It is important to be clear about this because it supported a view expressed at the Social Inclusion Corporate Reference Group (SICRG) and agreed by its members that the review should be about the targets originally set for the Strategy and their achievement. Put more strongly, it would be inappropriate to judge the Strategy against anything but the original targets in it. Anything else was "interesting" but not relevant to the study or the Strategy as the group understood it. For the same reason this evaluation of the Department's contribution to the Strategy will concern itself with its original targets and its success in achieving them. However, it will also attempt to divine the reasons for any success. Chapter 4 contains this evaluation.



### **3. Research Methodology and Methods**

#### **Summary**

This section of the thesis is concerned to do seven things:

- to summarise the overall research design and plan for this thesis.
- to describe the approaches and research instruments used in the case study.
- to explore the philosophical underpinnings of evaluation and in particular moral or ethical questions with which it appears to present a researcher. This will be done by reference to a history of the subject.
- linked to the 'history' of evaluation, to offer a summary of the difficult issues which an evaluator has to bear in mind.
- to define evaluation.
- to define its purposes.
- to discuss the various models which can support these purposes and to indicate why a particular model has been chosen to structure the reflective inquiry.

The discussion of what is meant by evaluation is undertaken at length in an attempt to clear away a number of difficult issues surrounding the subject and to

clarify what type of evaluation will be undertaken in the overall scheme of the thesis.

### **Research Design and Plan**

The timescale for this piece of research has been three years. In a sense this is a given and not open to debate as the amount of time allowed by the University for a major thesis to count towards the award of a Doctor of Education (EdD). More important will be how those thirty six months have been used.

It is arguable that generally research methods ought to be chosen to ensure that the best possible answers are obtained to the research questions. Thus if a research question needs a quantitative approach to evaluate it, then an appropriate one needs to be found. If the researcher is not skilled in the use of this approach, then there is a need to acquire new skills. However, in the real world it is more likely that a researcher will only try to deal with questions which can be answered using approaches in which he or she has expertise or with which he or she feels comfortable. This may result in some compromises both in the direction a study takes and the methods used in its execution.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the subject of this study is a complex one. In these circumstances it is important to look at it from more than one angle. It has not been sufficient just to review the history of the concept of Social Inclusion. In order to shed some specific light on it, there has been included within the thesis a case study, comprising an evaluation of the LEA's contribution to Someshire County Council's first Social Inclusion Strategy. This has had to have regard to the nature of the strategy itself. For example, a strategy which set out to

improve literacy levels of adults as measured by their achievement of particular qualifications would probably largely be a quantitative study. Someshire County Council's Social Inclusion Strategy did have some quantitative targets attached to it and their achievement (or not) clearly needs to be seen as indicators of its success. However, as indicated above, Social Inclusion is a much more slippery concept which does not always lend itself to quantification. It is, for example, sometimes perceived in the literature (Duffy 1999) to be about increasing people's 'social capital', 'the means of exchanging information, skills and help (they) need in their daily lives and how they can be helped to 'amass' that capital'. That can be measured crucially by, say, increased educational achievement but other aspects of it are less easily quantifiable. For example, people's feeling plugged into the support networks many of us take for granted may be a matter of personal perception. Similarly, accessibility of services may also be a matter of perception for both the service user and its provider. In order to reach relevant perceptions it has been necessary to use more qualitative research methods to tap into the feelings of both those who promoted the Strategy and those who were supposed to benefit from it. At the same time it has been necessary to attempt to elicit views about how and why any success in the promotion of inclusion was achieved.

The research methodology included:

- a literature study, taking in the concepts, in this Chapter, of evaluation and, earlier, social inclusion
- survey by questionnaire
- semi structured interviews
- participant observation as part of the SICRG.



The last three of these pieces of work were undertaken in the case study. The reasons for their choice as research tools are set out below.

The challenges that each of these techniques has presented are set out and explored in the Chapters of this study where their results are deployed, with the exception of the literature study. This last piece of work deserves some mention, if only to record how difficult it has been. Social Inclusion as a subject seems to be at the same time peculiarly 'unrecorded' and massively diffuse. Its boundaries seem to span all the social sciences and, physically, the European Union and beyond. Some web-based searches will throw up literally thousands of references in a range of languages which have increased exponentially as the term of the study has passed. However, the difficulties of definition referred to elsewhere, meant that a first cut of the results of any search fairly quickly reduced it to a relatively small amount of disciplined, well researched writing. It is this 'wheat' separated from the 'chaff' which is recorded in the bibliography at the end of this study. The danger in this process is that some key texts may have been missed. However, the cross referencing in what it has been possible to read in the time available suggests that the core of 'seminal' writing has been identified.

In addition to these tasks there was a need for some piloting of both the interviews and the questionnaire and time set aside to analyse the data collected and to draft and redraft the thesis. Finally, agreement to the study has been obtained from the Chief Executive of the County Council and its portfolio holder for Social Inclusion and reaffirmed with them and other key players. This took place in advance of the commencement of the timeline.

The timeline for the study agreed prior to its commencement has been as attached in Appendix A.

Two months were set aside as a contingency against unforeseen occurrences.

There could have been a number of problems with this plan. With the potential for this in mind, in addition to putting aside the contingency of two months, it was assumed that data collection and analysis would be completed within two years, leaving at least twelve clear months to write the thesis.

The difficulties anticipated along the way related to:

- availability of key interviewees at critical times
- non-return of questionnaires (there was assumed a potential need to reissue them two months after their first distribution)
- unforeseen pressures on myself and interviewees from peaks in workload
- inexperience in conducting research which meant that things took longer than anticipated or needed to be revisited.

In the event the only major impediment to progress was the last of these. Almost without exception all those whose support was sought for the study provided it willingly and in good time.

## **Development of Approaches and Research Instruments for the Case Study: the Reflective Inquirer and the Technical Rationalist**

As already indicated, in this study the author uses two voices. In Chapter 1 can be discerned a more traditional voice, akin to that of the technical rationalist, when discussing the definition and combating of social exclusion, its origins, significance, growth and measurement. In Chapters 2, 4 and, to some extent, 5 the voice is that of the reflective inquirer. In the first part of this Chapter there is an exploration of the concept of reflective inquiry alongside that of technical rationality. The second part describes the research instruments used in the thesis and their development.

### **The Reflective Practitioner**

#### **A Crisis of Confidence**

For Schon (1983) the concept of the reflective professional was born from his own reflection on the low esteem within which the professions were held by the 1970s. The growth in their number, the seeking by occupations for professional status based upon professional expertise, had not resulted in the unalloyed progress towards the ultimate common good. Over the period 1900 to 1966 the percentage of professionals in the labour force had risen from 4 to 13 (Schon p8). This relative explosion in the pool of professionals was perceived to be due to the post industrial growth in the knowledge industry and the reliance upon them by society to exploit it to the betterment of society. Even during this period there were some who were not confident that the professions were equal to this task. In particular town planners had to acknowledge that they had not been able to apply with any certainty of success professional solutions which were up to the challenges of an



increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. By 1981 the chorus of discontent with the performance of the professions had grown in the United States of America on the back of a series of military and environmental disasters. Not only, it seemed, did the knowledge in the hands of professionals not prevent these disasters, they seemed to contribute in no small part to them:

"A series of announced national crises..... seemed to have roots in the very practices of science, technology, and public policy that were called upon to alleviate them." (Schon 1983 p9)

At the same time there was a growing perception that professions were less concerned with any common good and more interested in their own existence and growth. Thus it transpired a much publicised shortage of doctors was in reality born of an unwillingness on their part to work in less favoured localities. This view of the self serving nature of the professions was reinforced by a range of scandals in the pharmaceutical industry and in the political arena, culminating in the Watergate scandal. A similar list could be produced for the United Kingdom including Sellafield, the thalidomide scandal and the BSE crisis. Inevitably this public crisis of confidence in the professions was replicated within their lead bodies and amongst individual professionals. There was then a widespread feeling that they neither lived by their own professed values nor were they effective within their domains. Schon is able to adduce a range of military, environmental and fiscal disasters which lend support to this view (Schon 1983 pp12-13). Perhaps not surprisingly, this has resulted in a trend towards deprofessionalisation both in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom. This has happened in two ways. Individual professions have looked to redefine their tasks and workloads to make them manageable while their

employers have also reconsidered their autonomy and sought to control them by a combination of regulation and managerial control. In the United Kingdom this has been particularly evident in the way central government has radically redefined the role of teachers over the period since the late 1980s (see Chapter 1).

Schon argues for a broader and more thoughtful response to this situation. It is no longer possible to expect professionals or managers within professions to be problem solvers in the tradition of managerial theory. In the complexity of contemporary society problems are increasingly interconnected, change occurs ever more quickly and the future seems uncertain. Conflicting demands for safety and profit, concentration on the basics and encouragement of creativity are not uncommon. The professional's task in this situation is to make sense of the contradictions, describe a future we would want and try to make it happen. Schon recognises the enormous difficulties in this situation but argues that to some extent professionals have always had to deal with these complexities and have developed ways of dealing with them through what he describes as an "artistry" (1983 p18) in their practice. This consists in part in finding the right problem within what can appear to be an overwhelming morass of difficulty before attempting to solve it. At the same time they are able to filter out for themselves supportive key messages, sensible advice, from amongst the contradictions they have thrown at them. The real issue, Schon believes (1983 p19), is that professionals have had historically no way of describing or passing on in any formal way this 'artistry' which has enabled them to both define and then to solve their problems.

## Positivism

Into this void Schon has brought his concept of the reflective practitioner what he refers to as "the distinctive structure of reflection in action" (1983 p ix). The traditional model which has shaped the thinking of the professions he calls Technical Rationality and describes as "instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique" (1983 p21). It is then the rigour and specialist knowledge which is said to set the professions apart from other careers (1983 p25), a view which is reinforced by the normal relationship between research and practice and the curricula of those who educate professionals. In this model research is separate from practice which is seen as being of a lower order. Researchers apply the science to what practitioners do. This relationship, Schon argues, is reflected in the curricula of the professions where there is concentration on the professional knowledge and applied science. The attitudinal and skill components, a secondary type of knowledge, are relegated to the end of the curricular queue, if they are addressed at all. This is particularly apparent in the education of those in the medical and legal professions where at best practice is seen as secondary to the acquisition of knowledge, at worst, it is suggested, professionalism can only be honed in the groves of academe.

This model of Technical Rationality owes its origins to what Schon describes (1983 p31) as the 'heritage of Positivism', serving as its "epistemology of practice", a position that has developed over three hundred years and which is embedded in the thinking and rationales of many university departments. This world view suggests that human progress can best be served by "harnessing science to create technology for the achievement of human ends". Partly a



reaction or counterbalance to the influence of religion and mysticism, it developed through the thinking of Bacon and Hobbes to find its doctrinal restatement in the writings of Comte so that by the late nineteenth century it had become a dominant philosophy. Early in the twentieth century the Vienna Circle felt confident enough to assert that propositions which could not be verified by analysis or by testing empirically had no meaning at all. At the heart of their enquiry was the use of experiments to decide on the relative validity of hypotheses about the world, seen and unseen. Practical knowledge, in this construct, was seen to be about the means of achieving scientific ends and its validity judged by recourse to experiment. As more was understood scientifically about cause and effect more or less value could be attributed to the artistry or craft of professionals. Their thinking was to be governed by the knowledge and discipline of scientific or academic theory. Any progress in their practice was to be achieved and directed by academics within the universities, using the practical problems of professionals to refine scientific knowledge and then hand back to them solutions. Even when the professions found ways into the universities themselves, the price they had to pay, Schon suggests (1983 p36), was to accept the legacy of Positivism and its view of the relative position of the practitioner. Thus the division between research and practice was maintained. This situation was further reinforced by the apparent success of medicine and engineering faculties in particular in solving problems presented to them through the Second World War up until the 1960s.

However, during the next twenty years or so the limitations of this intellectual paradigm became more apparent. In particular it could not easily take into account phenomena important to practice such as complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value - conflict. It was concerned with problem solving but not with problem setting in an often paradoxical or contradictory environment.

In this process the professional defines the problem by "naming the things to which [they] will attend and frame the context in which [they] will attend to them" (Schon 1983 p40). This may result in setting a problem which does not fit easily the canon of scientific knowledge or practice. This can be most obviously true in a range of fields such as social work, education and psychiatry where each context and each problem can be unique. Even traditionally technical disciplines such as engineering and medicine sometimes need this approach. Through an iterative process of problem framing and reframing against reality solutions can be found to what might be termed 'messy' challenges. While Positivism remains the underpinning attitude of many of the disciplines in universities, including those which support the majority of the professions, it is significant, Schon argues (1983 p48), that few, if any, philosophers of science would wish to be called 'positivists'. They perceive its limitations as a philosophy and the need to reengage with issues such as craft and artistry and their roles in problem solving.

### **Reflection**

Both as individuals and as professionals we rely on our implicit or intuitive understanding about how to act or behave. We feel, as Schon would have it, that we should act in a particular way. This is based upon an implicit recognition of phenomena and their consequences for our future action. They may or may not be judged for their importance against any explicit criteria. The conclusions we reach are often based upon a process of tacit induction against a canvass of professional experience and expertise. This is not to say that the process is unthinking or irrational. Very often there is conscious reflection, reformulation of problems and reframing of solutions to them. Sometimes there is not the knowing inherent in this way of thinking which is about reflection in action, either

consciously or unconsciously. It is important to be clear, Schon says (1983 p51), that intelligent action does not always have to be based on conscious rationality, about why it is appropriate. We often know tacitly and act upon more than we articulate. This 'knowing in action' is not unusual. Indeed it is the mode of ordinary practical knowledge. Similarly we reflect in action. By doing things repeatedly and well and reflecting upon the success either consciously or unconsciously we are able to achieve further success.

In his writings Schon offers a range of examples of situations where architects, psychotherapists, sportsmen and musicians either reflect on or in their action and achieve improvement in their performance. Often it is when practitioners experience something different that this reflection is most significant. This can result in an adjustment to our view of the situation or the role we play in it. Thus, in this mode we can gain important understanding of our situations and insights which aid us on our professional journey. It is within this tradition that Chapters 2 and 4 have been written. Participation in the development of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy, gaining feedback on it from and having discussion about it with a range of professionals offered significant additional opportunities for reflection on the research questions set out in the Introduction to this thesis. As Schon (1983 p138) says:

"The practitioner (in this case the author of the thesis) has built up a repertoire of examples, images, understandings and actions .... A practitioner's repertoire includes the whole of this experience, insofar as it is accessible to him for understanding and action."



**Research Instruments**

Robson (1999 p42) explores the purposes of research and the activity or approaches which might be used to achieve them. In table form they might be described as follows:

	Purpose	Activity
(i)	To divine what is happening, to gain insights, ask questions, assess phenomena	Case study
(ii)	To portray, describe	Survey
(iii)	To explain a causal (or other) relationship	Experiment

He later suggests which instruments might be used in undertaking these various activities. Surveys, he opines, might be approached by use of structured questionnaires, experiments by observation and measurement and case studies by use of less structured instruments such as interviews:

"To find out what they (respondents) think, feel, believe - use interviews, questionnaires or attitude scales." (p45)

However, this is not always the case. The overriding principle, he argues, must be that methods used should be: "based on what kind of information is sought, from whom and under what circumstances" (p45). Similarly Cohen & Manion suggest that the instrument used by a researcher will depend on which kind of research is

to be undertaken (p77). As the European Union would have it in Evaluating EU Expenditure Programmes : A Guide (1997 p40):

"The methodology to be used for data collection and analysis must be appropriate given the specific circumstances of the programme to be evaluated and the particular questions to be addressed."

However, the same author offers also what might be either an encouraging or disturbing piece of final gnomic advice (p42) for the author of this study:

"... it is worth highlighting the golden rule about evaluation techniques:

'Golden rule: there are no golden rules'."

Nevertheless, given the purposes of the research (to find out 'what had happened' and, more significantly if possible, why), it was decided to undertake a case study. As indicated at the end of this Chapter, it was undertaken in the tradition of the reflective inquirer rather than that of the Technical Rationalist.

As a preliminary to developing the necessary research instruments for the evaluation, discussions were held with the key Education Officers responsible for the areas of work to be evaluated (the Assistant County Education Officer (SEN) and Education Officer (Early Years & Childcare) in the summer of 2003 who were both happy to co-operate in the evaluation. They understood that the evaluation would not be about achievement of targets but rather focus on actions which various stakeholders thought had been 'helps' or 'hindrances' in achieving them. This could give them 'clues' to future actions they might take. In order to give

them some ownership of the process and the outcomes they were both asked to provide a range of data covering:

- start and end points for performance in relation to the Strategy.
- financial data which would give to respondents some feeling of 'scope' of activity in relation to targets in the Strategy.

They were asked also to suggest key pieces of activity which they thought had impacted significantly on the Council's performance in relation to their various targets. From their point of view this gave them the opportunity to test out their views of the actions which had proven effective. It also drew out some 'expert' opinion and provided a starting point for research instruments without precluding other opinions being expressed by the respondents. Both officers produced the information requested of them.

### **The Questionnaire**

In order to gather data for analysis it was decided to undertake a questionnaire survey. This would allow relatively easy and cost effective capture of information from an audience used to dealing with such instruments. The danger, to be proven false, was that its recipients would be overwhelmed by other demands and not respond to it.

A blank example of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix B. Its design was informed by a number of principles, garnered from the literature (e.g. Munn & Drever (1995), Gilham (2000) and Oppenheim (1966)). They were that:



- it was as short as was compatible with achieving its aims (to gain views on what actions of the LEA, schools and others had been helpful to achievement of parts of the Strategy).
- it provided sufficient background information for stakeholders to be able to reply without recourse to extraneous research or reading.
- it enabled respondents to reply quickly and easily but also allowed scope for more extended comment, including offering supporting evidence for their views.
- it encouraged those replying to make positive (or negative) responses rather than playing safe and going for 'middle' options by use of a five point scale, the last in which ('Other') was intended to indicate that the respondent had no view on the issue in question.
- it covered specific actions undertaken by the Education Department but recognised positively that actions by others, particularly schools, will have had strong impacts on the achievement of LEA targets.
- there were specific questions in relation to sub-groups of 'service receivers' where there was evidence nationally that they could be particularly affected for good or ill by 'service providers' (e.g. Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) students).
- the responses had to be in a form which allowed relatively easy analysis.

However, these informing principles were not without their challenges. The initial drafts of the questionnaire were too long, in an attempt to err on the side of 'comprehensiveness' and 'inclusivity', allowing respondents to say what they wanted to say. The various redraftings and discussions with colleagues with experience of questionnaire design both at the University and in the Education Department and, most importantly, testing it on a sample of respondents resulted in the production of a slimmer (though still substantial) document, one differentiated by audience so that respondents received only those parts of the instrument which were relevant to them. In all there were in excess of ten drafts of it. The piloting of the questionnaire was undertaken with the Education Department's Communications Unit. The decision to use them as 'guinea pigs' for its use was taken partly because of their expertise in presenting information to a wide range of audiences, and partly because of the backgrounds of its staff, both teaching and local government. It was encouraging in that it confirmed the general accessibility of the questionnaire. It also provided an alternative to sub-sections (d) and (e) of each major heading (Exclusions, Attendance etc). This is attached at Appendix C. However, it was rejected in favour of the latter after careful consideration on the grounds that:

- it seemed at first sight that it would offer a shorter alternative to the original. On reflection this was not the case and 'length' was, as indicated above, a prime consideration in shaping the questionnaire.
- it initially seemed attractive as apparently offering a clearer structure for respondents to work their ways through. However, on further reflection its different style to the rest of the questionnaire might have been disruptive to their understanding of how its constituent parts fitted together.

The downside of this refining process was that judgements had to be made about relevance of issues to be considered which might have been left more sensibly to respondents. The upside was that the gathering and analysing of data became more manageable. Much of what was in the questionnaire is referred to elsewhere. However, it may be useful to summarise its contents at this point. It included:

- a space for contact details of respondees
- a set of questions to answer about School Exclusion, Attendance, Early Years & Childcare and Support for Parents. Each of these was preceded by contextual data
- the questions were framed around actions which lead officers considered important in promoting inclusion in each of the four areas referred to in the previous bullet point
- respondents were invited to indicate against a five point scale whether they agreed that these actions were important in promoting inclusion. The rationale for the five point scale was provided earlier
- they were also invited to suggest other actions by schools or others which might have promoted inclusion
- they were asked to comment on the effectiveness of actions in relation to particular groups, i.e. girls, boys, pupils from the Black and Minority Ethnic groups and those with special educational needs
- finally, they were invited to comment on effectiveness of the use of resources
- at all points they were encouraged to add additional comment, including offering reasons for the conclusions they had reached.



Comment on the success or otherwise of this format is made in Chapter 4.

Inevitably the size of the sample for the questionnaire was constrained by resource limitations, principally 'time'. As Patton (1987 p9) puts it:

"Any given design is necessarily an interplay of resources, practicalities, methodological choices, creativity and personal judgements by the people involved."

Nevertheless, it attempted to address in its composition a number of questions (Q) of first principle. These questions were formulated to try to provide solutions to key problems identified in the literature in relation to sampling. The answers (A) arrived at which shaped the sample were:

Q: Audience?

A: A random sample of stakeholders:

- policy makers involved in the strategy (officers and politicians in the Education Department, Social Services and the Chief Executive's Department)
- service providers (in Education, Social Services and the voluntary and community sectors)
- schools (heads, SENCOs, governors)

- other officers not necessarily engaged but interested in the strategy (e.g. Drug Action Team)
- representatives of pressure groups (the SEN Parent Partnership, African Caribbean Association) which were in part proxies for parents and pupils.

Q: What were the explicit standards against which respondents would make judgements?

A: Pre-intervention and post-intervention performance statistics provided in the questionnaire.

Q: How would the sample be obtained?

A: (a) From Lists

List of policy makers (all 'senior' officers in Education, Social Services and Chief Executive's Department).

List all heads of services in Education, Social Services and the voluntary sector.

List of schools by type, age range etc.

List of lead partners in Police, YOT, DAT and Connexions.

List of pressure groups likely to be interested in the Strategy.

If someone occurred in more than one list, one questionnaire would be sent to that person but double (or whatever) weighting would be given to their response.

(b) By Sampling

A random sample was achieved by listing all possible respondents alphabetically within their respective categories, allocating them a number and producing a set of random numbers from within the range of numbers and applying it to the range. An internet-based random number generator was used to produce the final lists (<http://www.randomizer.org/form/htm>).

The final sample was in excess of a hundred potential respondents, approximately 40% of the potential 'pool', a sample size on which it is possible to have confidence. As Graham (2003) says (p115):

"A good sample is one which fairly represents the population from which it was taken."

A potential weakness of the sample was the over reliance on the views of professionals rather than those of service users (see Riley & Rustique Forrester 2002 p92). An attempt to mitigate this was made by engagement with pressure groups representing parents and pupils.



Given pressures on the time of very busy respondents, it was possible that there would have been an inadequate number of responses to the questionnaire for it to be considered a reasonable sample on which to make generalisations. In the event the distribution achieved an almost 50% response, i.e. nearly 20% of the target population. This would generally be regarded as a reasonable sample, both in its breadth and depth. However, it must be acknowledged that the relatively small numbers of respondents limits severely the possibility of using inferential statistics and the usefulness of the relative values in the figures. This health warning is repeated later.

### **Analysis of Responses to Questionnaire**

This analysis falls into two parts:

- a statistical analysis which explores the responses to those questions where a reply was invited on a scale of 1-5.
- a qualitative discussion of the comments which respondents made in the various parts of the questionnaire which invited elaboration on numerical 'scorings'.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The statistical analysis comprises:

- a set of overarching comments.

- reflection on each of the four strands of the Strategy on which comments were requested.

The figures on which this commentary is based are included in Chapter 4.

They summarise statistically the contents of the questionnaires in a number of ways:

- overall 'success ratings' by all respondents of the four 'Aspects' of the Social Inclusion Strategy they were asked to comment on (School Exclusion, Attendance, Early Years & Childcare and Support for Parents) - Figure 1.
- a similar analysis to that in Table 1 but by individual groupings of respondents (Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and a catch all 'Other' group) - Figures 2 - 5.
- an overall analysis of success ratings by all respondents of Particular Actions by the LEA within the four 'Aspects' of the Strategy referred to above - Figures 6 - 10.
- a similar analysis to that in Figures 6 - 10 but by the three 'groupings' referred to in Figures 2 - 5.

The 20 Particular Actions on which respondents were asked to comment can be found in the sample questionnaire with its covering letter at Appendix B. As indicated earlier, these Actions were chosen for inclusion in the questionnaire by the lead officers for each of the four 'Aspects' of the Social Inclusion Strategy

under scrutiny. They had chosen them as actions which they thought would affect the relevant outcome positively. This was an attempt to achieve what evaluations often fail to achieve, i.e. identifying actions which have led to success.

Respondents were invited to comment on the overall success of the four Aspects of the Strategy and on the contribution of each Action to the achievement of success. They were asked also to offer opinions on the efficacy of actions in relation to particular groups of students who might be seen to be more or less at risk of exclusion (see Riley 2003 p6), i.e.:

- minority ethnic groups
- boys or girls
- those with special educational needs.

Comment was invited on use of resources by the LEA to support its aims. Finally, observations were invited on actions undertaken by schools and use of their resources (as opposed to the LEA) which might have promoted inclusion, overall and in relation to the particular 'at risk' groups referred to above. In the original County Strategy actions taken specifically by schools were not included as 'agents' for change. However, given the evidence elsewhere for the centrality of "in school activity" to change agency (see Riley et al passim), it seemed sensible to explore how in any future Council Strategy schools might be positively engaged with the County Council in combating exclusion and in what ways.

As already indicated, the tabular analysis of the responses to the questionnaires is set out in Chapter 4.



**Interviewing**

The interview, as a research tool, is not, of course, without its challenges. Cohen & Manion (p269) summarise the demands and limitations of interviews as follows (adapted):

Consideration	Interview
1. Personal need to collect data	Requires interviewers
2. Major expense	Payment to interviewers
3. Opportunities for response-keying (personalisation)	
4. Opportunities for asking	Extensive
5. Opportunities for probing	Extensive
6. Relative magnitude of data reduction	Possible
7. Typically, the number of respondents who can be reached	Great (because of coding)
8. Rate of return	
9. Sources of error	Limited
10. Overall reliability	Good
11. Emphasis on writing skill	Interviewer, instrument, coding, sample
	Quite limited
	Limited

Robson (p229) offers a similar critique.

Authors on the subject offer warnings to the tyro interviewer about the rigour with which the instrument must be used, e.g:

“Topics need to be selected, questions devised, methods of analysis considered, a schedule prepared and piloted.” (Bell, p92)

‘(We must) realise how basic the phrasing of questions is to worthwhile research.’ (Payne, p3)

and

‘wording is more than a game like anagrams or acrostics – that it has the serious object of making certain that our meanings are understood.’ (Payne p15)

Similarly Robson refers to the apparent – but deceptive – simplicity of the interview and quotes Powney & Watts (1987) who argue that it is:

“as easy as writing a book – most of us have basic literacy skills but few attain literary art.”

Despite the inherent difficulties in using this tool the ‘clinching’ arguments in deciding to conduct some interviews for this study were:

- using the interview, it was possible to get directly to persons from whom insights were being sought without any loss of immediacy from an intervening medium.

- the interview seemed an appropriate 'second' tool to use as a follow up to the questionnaire in what is a case study. It offered some triangulation and affirmation of insights.
- finally, there was an opportunity – admittedly with associated problems which are returned to below – at a particular time to gain firsthand knowledge on this matter, an opportunity which might not be repeated. As Buchanan, Boddy & McCalman have written (Ed. Alan Bryman, 1988): “The main argument ... is that the researcher should adopt an opportunistic approach to field work in organisations.” (p53)

### The Particular Type of Interview

The reasons for wishing to undertake interviews for this study have been set out above. There is set out in more detail later the preparation undertaken in advance of the interviews and a view of their adequacy. This section, as indicated already, is restricted to the theoretical underpinning to that preparation and the reasons for deciding to use a particular type of interview.

Robson describes an interview as a “kind of conversation; a conversation with a purpose” (p228). Bell (p91) sets out the general advantages of using the interview as a research tool. They include:

- its adaptability
- the possibility of probing and following up ideas
- access to the motives and feelings of the interviewee



- similarly to the interviewee's body language and what that can add to an exploration.

Cohen & Manion (p280-83) usefully summarise the strengths and weaknesses of different types of interview:

Type of Interview	Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Informal conversational interview	Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording.	Increases the salience and relevance of questions; interviews are built on and emerge from observations; the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances.	Different information collected from different people with different questions. Less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions don't arise 'naturally'. Data organisation and analysis can be quite difficult.
2. Interview guide approach	Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence	The outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat	Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and

	and working of questions in the course of the interview.	systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.	wording questions can result in substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses.
3. Standardised open-ended interviews	The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order.	Respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing comparability of responses; data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview. Reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used. Permits decision-makers to see and review the instrumentation used in the evaluation.	Little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardised wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.

		Facilitates organisation and analysis of the data.	
4. Closed quantitative interviews	<p>Questions and response categories are determined in advance.</p> <p>Responses are fixed; respondent chooses from among these fixed responses.</p>	<p>Data analysis is simple; responses can be directly compared and easily aggregated; many short questions can be asked in a short time.</p>	<p>Respondents must fit their experiences and feelings into the researcher's categories; may be perceived as impersonal, irrelevant, and mechanistic. Can distort what respondents really mean or experienced by so completely limiting their response choices.</p>

In this situation it did not appear appropriate to conduct a ‘closed quantitative’ or ‘standardised open’ interview. They did not seem to offer the flexibility required with people whose thoughts could not be anticipated except in the broadest sense. To impose an inflexible structure on them in advance might have been to



deny the possibility of unexpected insights. However, it was important to be conscious of the warnings in the literature on this subject, e.g:

"Unstructured interviews centred around a topic may, and in unskilled hands do, produce a wealth of valuable data, but such interviews require a great deal of expertise to control and a great deal of time to analyse." (Bell p93);  
and

"... if you are a first time interviewer, you may find it easier to use a structured format." (Bell p92)

It was decided, therefore, to opt for what in Cohen & Manion's taxonomy might be seen as something between the 'interview guide' and 'informal conversational' approaches. This is characterised by Bell (p94) as:

"The guided or focussed interview ... no questionnaire or checklist is used but a framework is established by selecting topics around which the interview is guided. The respondent is allowed a considerable degree of latitude within the framework."

Robson (1999) refers to this approach as the 'middle ground' where:

"the interview has clearly defined purposes, but seeks to achieve them through some flexibility in wording and in the presentation of questions."  
(p227)

In preparing for the interview regard was had to:

- the interview checklist provided by Bell (pp99-101)
- the interview schedule offered by Robson (p235)
- Kvale's "seven stages of interview investigation" as set out in Cohen & Manion (pp273-287)

It was important also to heed the warnings offered by Robson (1999), Powney & Watts (1987) referred to above about the deceptive simplicity of the technique.

Almost the final question in the questionnaire was whether the respondent would be willing to undertake a follow-up interview. Irrespective of the response to this question it had always been planned to interview a sample of stakeholders involved in the Strategy. Given the nature of the evaluation, this was to include:

- officers involved in implementing the Strategy (identified by their responsibilities)
- elected members involved in shaping it (similarly identified)
- school representatives (identified either by volunteering or as part of a 'representative' cross section)
- if possible, some representatives or proxies for service recipients (parents and students)

In the event fourteen respondents agreed to be interviewed. They fell fairly neatly across the hoped for categories except for that of elected member i.e:

- three secondary schools
- six primary (including infant and junior) schools

- one special school
- two officers
- a representative of a parent support organisation
- a representative of a voluntary organisation who was also a school governor

The topics for the interviews were filtered from the analysis of the questionnaire responses in an attempt to test preliminary findings from it, i.e.:

- Overall knowledge of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy
- Exclusions:
  - the importance of a national emphasis on this matter
  - the effectiveness of the Council's Behaviour Management Panels
  - the importance of parental engagement, including use of the SEN Parent Partnership
  - the importance of clear procedures
  - the work of the Pupil Reintegration Unit (PRU)
  - behaviour as an in-school issue
- Attendance:
  - the importance of a national interest in the issue
  - the work of the Education Social Work Service (ESWS)
  - the effects of its recent reorganisation
  - the relevance of multi-agency work
  - the importance of in-school strategies
- Early Years:



- the importance of a national interest in the area
  - the differential impact on some groups
  - the importance of new resources
- Parenting:
    - general lack of resources
    - the differential impact of the resource
    - disappointment at the lack of expansion of the number of parent centres

It will be apparent from the later results of the interviews that interviewees did not feel constrained by this framework and, indeed, on some occasions disagreed with the initial findings of the research.

### **Evaluation, its Meaning and History**

It is important before turning to the results of the evaluation to describe and acknowledge various pieces of baggage which the practice of evaluation brings with it. In particular there is a debate about:

- whether evaluation can ever be truly independent, that is, free from the influences of its sponsors, and
- whether it is a type of research or is a separate field of activity

There is a sense in which these issues can be best understood by studying its history. Norris (1990) suggested that this spanned 30 (now 45) years. Robson (1999) refers to evaluation as:

"a field which has grown rapidly since the 1960s, helped by the US government setting aside a proportion of the budget of the many social programmes initiated at that time for evaluation". (p171)

The debate about the independence of the evaluator seems to centre on these origins within the USA and, latterly, the UK. They were, in the USA, Norris (1990) suggests, rooted in 'social planning'. Indeed evaluation was seen as the 'handmaiden of educational administration and bureaucratic control'. This seemingly disparaging description suggests an instrumental purpose for evaluation rather than it existing in its own right. It is about helping to support the achievement of political ends rather than an independent field of enquiry. Robson (1999) also refers to a similar impetus behind the growth in evaluation in the UK. Some of this can be traced through (Norris 1990) a number of events and projects:

- the establishment of the Schools Council
- the introduction of categorical funding for TVEI and LAPP
- the establishment of the Assessment of Performance Unit in Schools III Branch of the DES and
- what he calls 'the centralising and accountability' drives of the neo Conservatives in the late 1980s

Rewriting his book today he could point to these traditions stretching onwards from the election of the Conservative government in 1979, through to the New Labour government of 1997 and into its manifesto as it started its new term of office. They show themselves, for example, in the various evaluations of the systems for the national assessment of pupils, the publication of results at the

various key stages and the targeted drives on literacy, numeracy and ICT. A quick recent search of the DfES website 'threw up' over four hundred pieces of research it has sponsored recently, most of which might, in part or whole, be described as 'evaluative'. A much longer list could be adduced but the growth of evaluation as a tool, an instrument, to promote social policy seems clear and continuing.

The problem in all of this for some researchers is that evaluation has been 'sullied' or contaminated by this political or bureaucratic agenda. Its users are not objective, they say, nor can they be when evaluation relies on political (or other party pris) funding for its existence. Norris (1990) refers to the very influential Cambridge conferences in the early 1970s about the nature and purposes of evaluation and suggests that:

"By 1979 the political importance of accountability and the growth of managerialism were proving serious obstacles to the formative and democratic intentions of those evaluators who had met at Cambridge seven years earlier". (p48)

He questions the independence of evaluators tied into this agenda, particularly in the UK where the DES at that time was perceived to be controlling the outputs from the research it was commissioning (p90). Similar accusations could be levelled at evaluations of EU expenditure programmes (EU, 1997). Paradoxically he is able to contrast this situation with that in the USA where evaluation had its origins. By this time, he argues, it has managed in part at least to distance itself from its original masters and drivers. Its Freedom of Information Act, he suggests, goes some way to counterbalance any tendencies by government to suppress any research findings which did not support its agenda (p86).



For fear of this alleged suppression of the 'truth' some would wish to separate out evaluation from research. With its feet firmly rooted in notions of academic freedom, untainted by any political considerations, other research is offered as a contrast. Norris (1990) usefully summarises this debate (p97ff). Some, he says, see evaluation as an application of research methods to throw light on an issue where there is need to take action. Others see it as an extension of research into the 'practical domain'. Those who wish to contrast evaluation and research offer a number of arguments in support of their case (Norris 1990 p98). Norris, however, dismisses them as being:

"based on a misleading account of science and a rather arcane view of educational research confined to a rather textbook version of methodology."  
(p99)

Guba & Lincoln (1989 p7) go as far as to suggest that those who try to criticise evaluation as unscientific: 'miss completely its fundamentally social, political and value orientated character'.

In summary, they argue, the purists who wish to dismiss evaluation because of the restrictions placed on it either deliberately or because of the baggage which comes with a commission ignore the different but similar weight of baggage which comes with the position of any researcher. This may include their own history and experiences, the culture of the organisation within which they work and the prevailing cultural norms in society.

Perhaps, therefore, crucial in this debate is an acknowledgement of both the strengths and weaknesses of any piece of work which might be termed 'evaluation'. There will always be, for example, constraints on any person working in this or any research field. They can relate, for example, to amounts of resources available of all types, to their origins, their paymaster, and to the purpose of a project. However, similar constraints and equally important ones may apply to the 'pure' researcher. In his summary Norris (1990) usefully suggests that if the contrast between research and evaluation had any validity, it is of decreasing size:

"Increasingly resources for educational research are directed towards questions and tasks that are determined not by the curiosity of researchers or the needs of teachers and students, but by the demands of governments for solutions to centrally defined problems". (p101)

If the difficulty in separating evaluation from research existed in 1990, the intervening eleven years have only reinforced what was a growing convergence of the two. Robson (1999) can thus suggest that:

"Much enquiry in the real world is essentially some form of evaluation". (p6)

and set out his own position on this issue:

"evaluations are essentially indistinguishable from other research in terms of design, data collection, techniques and methods of analysis". (p174)

While it is possible, therefore, like Cohen & Mannion 2000 (p387) to regret what some see as the politicisation of evaluation and to try to maintain a contrast with 'pure' research, it seems an increasingly difficult position to hold. When framing the proposal for this study a debate was had with its supervisor about whether it was appropriate to undertake an "evaluation" rather than a "piece of research". Given the current understanding of where evaluation now stands in the scheme of things this seems to have been a false contrast. It may be more helpful to identify the issues which an evaluator needs to consider in completing any piece of 'research' to help avoid some of its potential pitfalls. This was vital in completing this study.

### **Issues for the Evaluator to Bear in Mind**

These are considered by Robson 1999 (p172). They may be summarised as:

- awareness of the nature of the sponsor's interest in the evaluation (disinterested, from a political or other standpoint)
- the importance of identifying the real client (the sponsor or e.g. the user of a service)
- how vested interests are to be addressed (e.g. 'blockers' within the evaluation)
- the potential impact of the evaluation on others (e.g. jobs and lives in general)
- the evaluator's own stance (e.g. ethical and political)
- how methods used can favour particular interest groups (who, for example, may be more or less articulate)
- practicalities within what may be a constrained timescale with limited resources



Perhaps above all any evaluation, he suggests, should meet the following criteria:

- *Utility.* There is no point in doing an evaluation if there is no prospect of its being useful to some audience.
- *Feasibility.* An evaluation should only be done if it is feasible to conduct it in political, practical and cost-effectiveness terms.
- *Propriety.* An evaluation should only be done if you can demonstrate that it will be carried out *fairly* and *ethically*.
- *Technical adequacy.* Given reassurance about utility, feasibility and proper conduct, the evaluation must then be carried out with technical skill and sensitivity. (1999 p181)

He also offers a salutary warning that:

'Evaluations are things to avoid unless you have a good chance of doing them properly'. (p180)

As has already been suggested, it was important to bear in mind this debate about evaluation in completing the study. Reference is briefly made to the author's position in relation to this piece of research in the abstract at its commencement: i.e. every effort was made to sustain a position of 'disinterested enquirer after the truth'. The sponsor, as payer of the student's university fees, was Someshire County Council. The Council's stance was also one of disinterest, making no requirement that the researcher should either make the research available to it, should explore particular avenues or take particular lines. The real client was intended to be the population of the County. It was hoped that the results of the research would influence, perhaps support, future development of the County's

Social Inclusion Strategy to the benefit of its citizens. Consideration was given to the impact the study might have on others, in particular those involved in the drafting, implementation and evaluation of the 2001 Strategy. However, both the culture of the Council, one of openness, welcoming external scrutiny and the lapse of time between the development of the Strategy and the publication of the research results (when most of those involved in its various phases had moved on to other things) suggested that there was little likelihood of impact on individuals. For similar reasons there were no 'blockers', only people genuinely willing to support the study. The particular groups of professionals engaged in the study, to judge by their responses, did not find the methods used 'exclusive'. The issue of time constraints is dealt with above. It is perhaps for others to make judgements about the work's final "utility, feasibility, propriety and technical adequacy". However, it is hoped that its findings will prove useful for the County in its future policy development, implementation and evaluation, and perhaps for a wider audience.

### **Definition**

It is important to understand also what is meant by evaluation, its features and its limitations. There is no shortage of definitions of the term. For example, the Australian Curriculum Development Centre, quoted in House (1986), suggests that:

"Evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining and providing information useful for making decisions and judgements about educational programs and curricula". (p117)

Stoke & Denny quoted in Kemmis (1969) suggest in a more philosophical mode that:

"Considered broadly evaluation is the discovery of the nature and worth of something".

Professor Kerr, of the Evaluation Advisory Committee of the Schools Council, writing specifically about the field of education and quoted in Norris (1990), suggests that:

... "evaluation is to be thought of as the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational programme at all stages of its development". (p33)

Norris (1990) himself declares that:

"Most definitions of evaluation suggest that its purpose is to conserve, obtain and provide information which decision makers in their many forms ... can use to make decisions about the future of specified programmes or policies". (p101)

Perloff (1979) similarly asserts that:

"When all is said and done, the major purpose of an evaluation of an activity or program is to provide as rational and as comprehensive as possible a basis for making decisions vis à vis program formulation or adoption, changes or dissolution". (p9)



More recently Robson (1999) quotes Suchman's (1967) definition of an evaluation as:

"a method of determining the degree to which a planned programme achieves its desired objectives".

He himself describes its purpose as:

... "to assess the effects and effectiveness of something, typically some innovation or intervention: policy, practice or service". (p170)

See also the European Commission's (1997 p9) definition of evaluation.

From these various definitions of evaluation it is possible to draw out a number of common denominators. There seems to be broad acceptance that:

- it involves the collection of information
- it usually relates to specific programmes or projects and their aims
- its purpose is to enable judgements to be made about the achievement of the aims
- these judgements are intended to inform action in relation to the programmes or projects
- there is a timeframe involved, either during the life of the subject of the evaluation, at its end or both.

## Purpose

It is suggested above that the broad purpose of evaluation is to enable judgements to be made about achievement of aims. However, there are a number of potential sub-sets to this overall purpose. They relate broadly to the stage in the life of the piece of work when its evaluation takes place. These are summarised by the Evaluation Research Society (1980) as:

- a. *Front-end analysis* (pre-installation, context, feasibility analysis). This takes place before a programme starts, to provide guidance in its planning and implementation. This is clearly more about the potential to achieve aims rather than their actual achievement.
- b. *Evaluability assessment*. This type of evaluation assesses the feasibility of evaluation approaches and methods. This appears to be in some form all but a necessary precursor to any evaluation.
- c. *Formative evaluation* (developmental, process). Its purpose is to provide information for programme improvement, modification and management. This is evaluation part way into a project to decide whether there needs to be a correction to its current course.
- d. *Impact evaluation* (summative, outcome, effectiveness). This concentrates on programme results and effectiveness, especially for deciding about programme continuation, expansion, reduction and future funding.

- e. *Programme monitoring.* This is 'in-programme' and is a check for, for example, compliance with policy, tracking of services delivered and counting of clients.
- f. *Evaluation of evaluation* (secondary evaluation, meta-evaluation, evaluation audit). This involves critiques of evaluation reports, re-analysis of data and external reviews of internal evaluations.

Any evaluation may serve one or more of these purposes. There may, of course, be purposes which are not declared by the evaluators. These may involve uncomfortable, perhaps 'unscientific', limitations or subtexts required by its sponsors. They may relate to what Suchman (1967) refers to as eyewash (skimming the surface), whitewash (cover up), submarine (an attempt to 'torpedo' a programme), posture (going through the motions) and postponement (using evaluation to avoid decision making).

A simpler but useful distinction into which the Evaluation Research Society's taxonomy could be shoe-horned can be made between whether evaluations are intended to be:

- formative or
- summative

Formative evaluations are intended to help in the development (or formation) of a programme. A summative evaluation usually offers an 'end of term' summary of its effects and effectiveness. In practice this distinction can become blurred. Any summative evaluation might be used to 'inform' a further stage of a project



perhaps at the time of the evaluation 'yet to be agreed'. Similarly a formative evaluation can have various junctures at it which offer 'summaries' of progress and options for future action.

All of this suggests that evaluation is largely concerned with what has occurred or is happening in a project, what might be termed 'matters of fact'. However, more recently there has been some debate in the evaluation of initiatives to promote social inclusion about whether the evaluation is actually about the effectiveness of 'means' to achieve 'given ends' and accountability in what Henkel (1991) calls the 'new evaluative state'. There is a growing body of opinion that it should be as much about understanding 'how and why success is achieved' (Scottish Social Inclusion Network 1999) or questioning the actual values or goals behind projects (Macintyre 1984 and Dryzek 1990). This is particularly challenging when considering the difficulties inherent in evaluating complex multi-agency projects (Sanderson 2000 p217) where there may not be an immediately discernible link between cause and effect. Nevertheless, if evaluations are to be useful, some attempt should be made to offer lessons for future action in the given field.

### **Models of Evaluation**

It is important also to acknowledge that in support of these different purposes there are different models of evaluation which can be defined by reference to the techniques they employ. Robson 1999 (p176) offers a summary of them in his Box 7.2 (also discussed in House (1978)):

## Models of Evaluation

A wide range of models has been used. They include:

1. *Systems analysis.* Quantitative measurement of inputs and outputs looking at effectiveness and efficiency.
2. *Behavioural objectives.* Focuses on the extent to which clear, specific and measurable goals are achieved.
3. *Needs-based evaluation.* Examines the extent to which actual client needs are being met. Sometimes referred to as 'goal-free' evaluation.
4. *Connoisseurship.* Considers the extent to which the programme (or whatever is the focus) meets the evaluator's own, expertise-derived, standards of excellence.
5. *Accreditation.* External accreditors determine the extent to which the programme meets agreed professional standards.
6. *Adversary.* Two teams of evaluators do battle over the pros and cons and the issue of whether the programme should be continued.
7. *Transaction.* Involves a concentration on the programme processes.
8. *Decision-making.* The evaluation is structured by the decisions to be made.
9. *Discrepancy.* Compares implementation, and outcome ideals, to actual achievements.
10. *Illuminative.* Focuses on qualitative methods, inductive analysis and naturalistic inquiry.
11. *Responsive evaluation.* Emphasises responsiveness to all of the 'stakeholders' in evaluation.

### **Model for the Case Study**

As indicated earlier it was possible and, indeed, necessary to complete a substantial part of the research to be undertaken in this thesis by reference to previous literature on the subject. However, a significant part of it was the reflective inquiry described in Chapter 4 of how Social Inclusion has been promoted in Someshire. It is a summative evaluation as an account of the success to date of the Council's Strategy, (examining what the European Commission describes as a programme's intervention logic (1997 p16)). However, it is also formative for any next stages of the Council's Strategy, in that it attempts to address the difficult but important (see Yin 1993 p38) questions about how and why success has or has not been achieved. It might be described in Mohr's terms (1995 p1) as an impact analysis. Finally, it is important to reiterate that the findings of this study are not in themselves the evidence on which the conclusions in Chapter 5 are based but are a further source of stimulation to professional reflection. Schon contrasts the Technical Rationality associated with academia and what he describes as the major professions of law and medicine and the intuitive 'artistry' of the minor professions, including education (1995 p23). Historically, it has been suggested, the latter have lacked an accepted framework within which their particular type of reflection can be described and therefore, be valued. He argues for its value and its ability to deal with issues which traditional research may not be able to approach:

"When someone reflects-in-action he becomes a researcher in the practice context .... His enquiry is not limited [as it is in traditional research] to deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends.



.... Because his experimenting [in this situation] is a kind of action .... his reflection can proceed in situations of uncertainty because it is not based on the dichotomies of Technical Rationality". (1995 p68)

It is within this tradition of the reflective practitioner that the contents of Chapters 2 and 4 sit.

It is hoped that this piece of work will prove useful for the County in achieving its overall aims but also for the understanding more broadly of how social inclusion can be promoted in the UK. The next Chapter recaps how this evaluation and its findings fit into the overall pattern of the thesis, describes its scope and then summarises its results.

#### **4. Reflective Inquiry**

##### **Scope**

As indicated at the outset, the main focus of this thesis is the development of the concept of social inclusion from its origins in Europe through to its adoption by the New Labour Government in the United Kingdom in its first term of office. In order to indicate the impact that the concept has had on government and, more importantly, the lives of its citizens it was decided to undertake a piece of reflective inquiry in a situation where the concept was to be used to drive policy and practice forward. This piece of fieldwork was undertaken in the County of Someshire in the period September 2003 - July 2004. The prime reason for undertaking an evaluation as part of this thesis was, as indicated above, because of its potential formative influence on the policy of Someshire County Council in relation to social inclusion. It was not in itself a source of evidence upon which the conclusions in the thesis were based. It was an additional source of stimulation to reflection on the concept of social inclusion. Reference was made in the Abstract to the author's position as an 'outside' researcher and as an 'inside' officer of the County Council. However, it is worth stressing again the tension that this dual position can bring when undertaking fieldwork. Particular care had to be taken at all times to be aware of the impact that this might have had on respondents to the questionnaire and the interviewees. As also indicated earlier, the inquiry was another step in the author's journey towards an understanding of social exclusion and how it might be combated. If offered broad confirmation of the conclusions reached about social inclusion in Chapter 1.

In the original proposal for this thesis it had been the intention that the inquiry would be an evaluation of the impact of the County Council's Social Inclusion Strategy. However, this aim was reviewed for a number of reasons, principally:

- the County's decision to undertake its own review of the Strategy. It would have been unfair on and confusing for stakeholders to have asked them to participate in another evaluation less than a year later. It is likely also that responses to the request for co-operation with a second review would have been low.
- in reality the original project was probably too ambitious for a thesis of this size. The amount of work needed to do the subject justice would not have been possible for one person within the given timeframe for the completion of the thesis. It simply would not have been manageable.

Nevertheless, it was possible to agree with colleagues in the Education Department that the review conducted by the Council had not been as helpful to them in their practice as they would have wished. While, therefore, the review had gathered information about whether they had hit the targets they owned in the Council's Strategy, it had offered no new insights into how and why they had hit them or any suggestions for future action. In a real sense this would have been much more useful than the data collection and presentation that was undertaken as part of the Council's overall review. As indicated earlier, this did no more than reflect back to them the data they had provided for the review: they already knew whether they had hit their targets or not. In this context staff in the Education Department and, as it transpired, in schools were willing to co-operate in a 'second' evaluation.



However, over the same period things had also moved on within the Department which made it sensible to further constrain the piece of work. Its contribution to the Strategy had fallen into six areas:

- reduction of school exclusions
- promotion of school attendance
- provision of nursery education and childcare
- improvements in support for parents
- improved levels of literacy and numeracy in schools
- improvements in the basic skill levels in targeted groups of adults

Of these the last two had recently been subject to evaluation outside the Council's review of its Social Inclusion Strategy. In anticipation of a formal Ofsted inspection of the Council's Adult Education provision in 2004 external consultants were employed in the summer of 2003 to run a 'mock' pre-inspection of it. That report was published in July 2003 and was the subject of an action plan presented to the Education Department's Management Team in the following September. The Department's implementation of the Foundation Stage and its managing of the National Strategies were also evaluated and publicly reported on in 2002. In the event, therefore, it seemed sensible and reasonable to concentrate the evaluation on the areas of exclusion, attendance, early years provision, childcare and support for parents which were more fertile fields for investigation and had been less 'trampled upon' than the others.

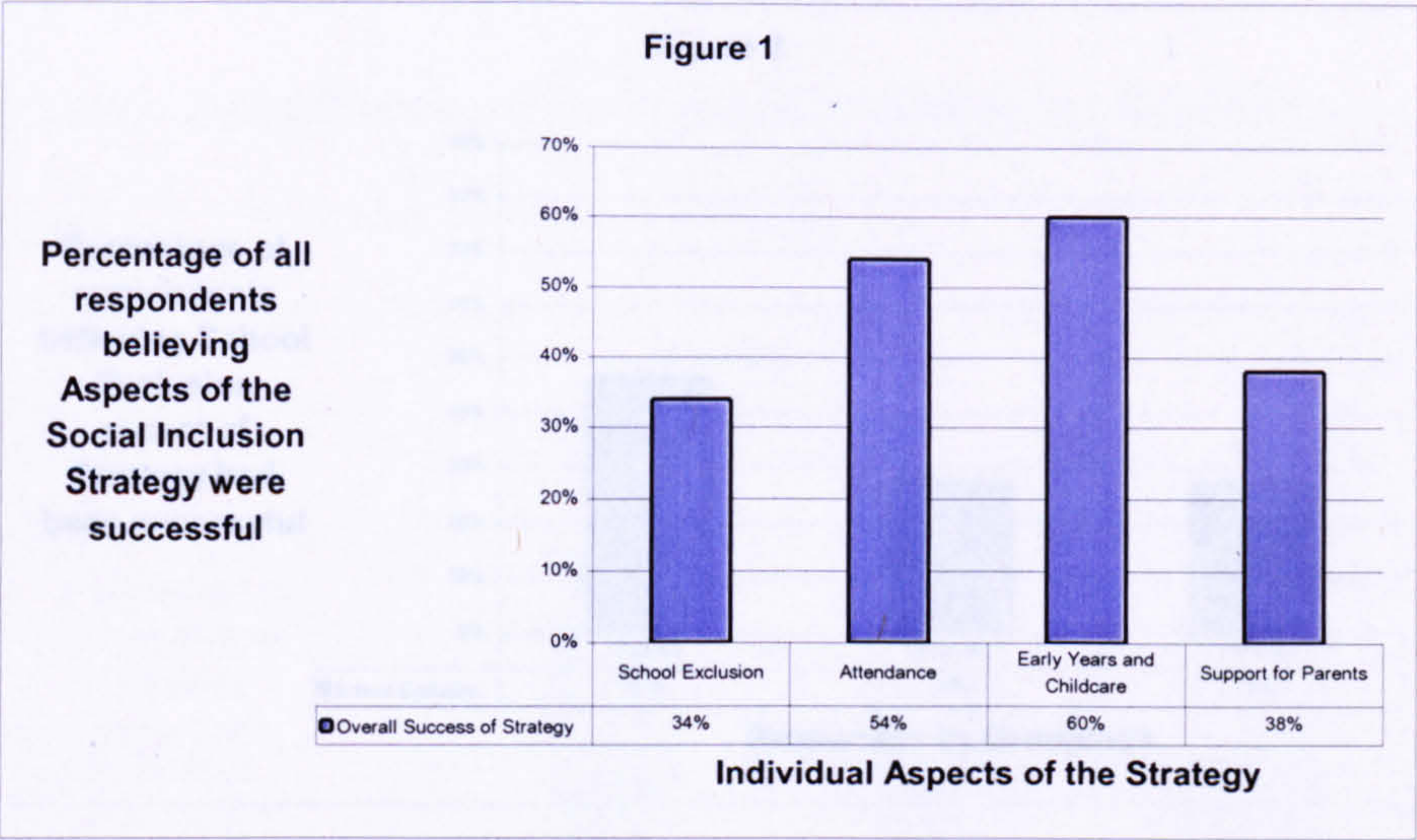
## **Quantitative**

The proposed methodology for the analysis of the quantitative data provided by the questionnaires was set out in Chapter 3 above. However, it became clear when the questionnaires were returned and in the follow-up interviews that respondents had struggled to differentiate between agreement/disagreement and strong agreement/disagreement. It was difficult, therefore, to justify any analysis of the data which tried to sustain this level of subtlety or sophistication. Thus, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were conflated for presentational purposes in the figures as were 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'. From this data it was possible to draw out a number of only general conclusions about the success of the Strategy and actions which had been supportive of it. It must be further acknowledged that the relatively small number of respondents precludes any use of inference from the statistics and limits the significance of the relative values in the figures. Thus, without both the qualitative data in the questionnaires and the follow up interviews this data was of relatively limited value. Nevertheless, with all of these health warnings it is still worth offering some tentative comment on it.

## **General**

It will be seen from Figure 1 below that, overall, the least successful Aspect of the Strategy was perceived to be that relating to exclusions with an overall approval rating of 34% and the most successful the Early Years & Childcare Strategy.

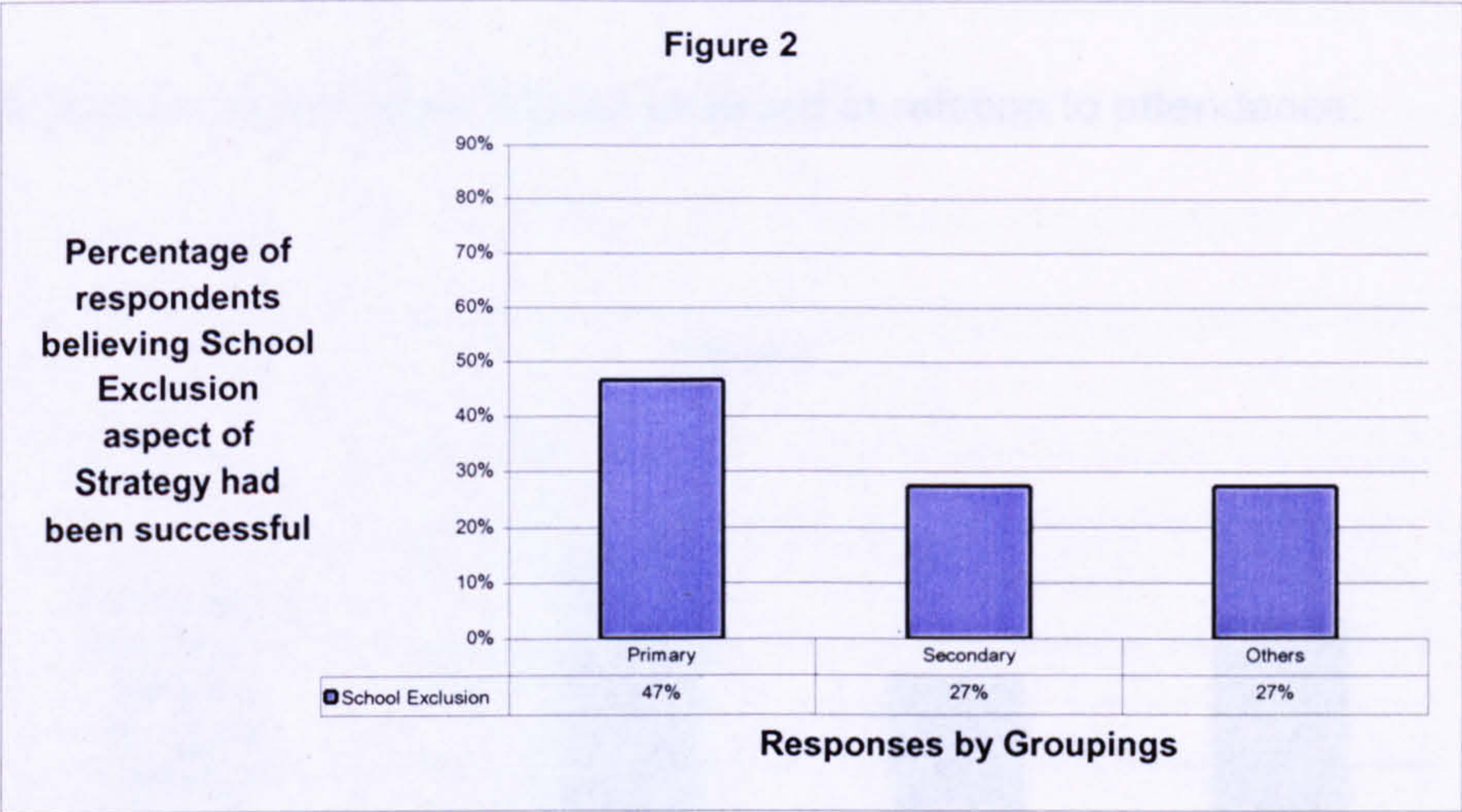




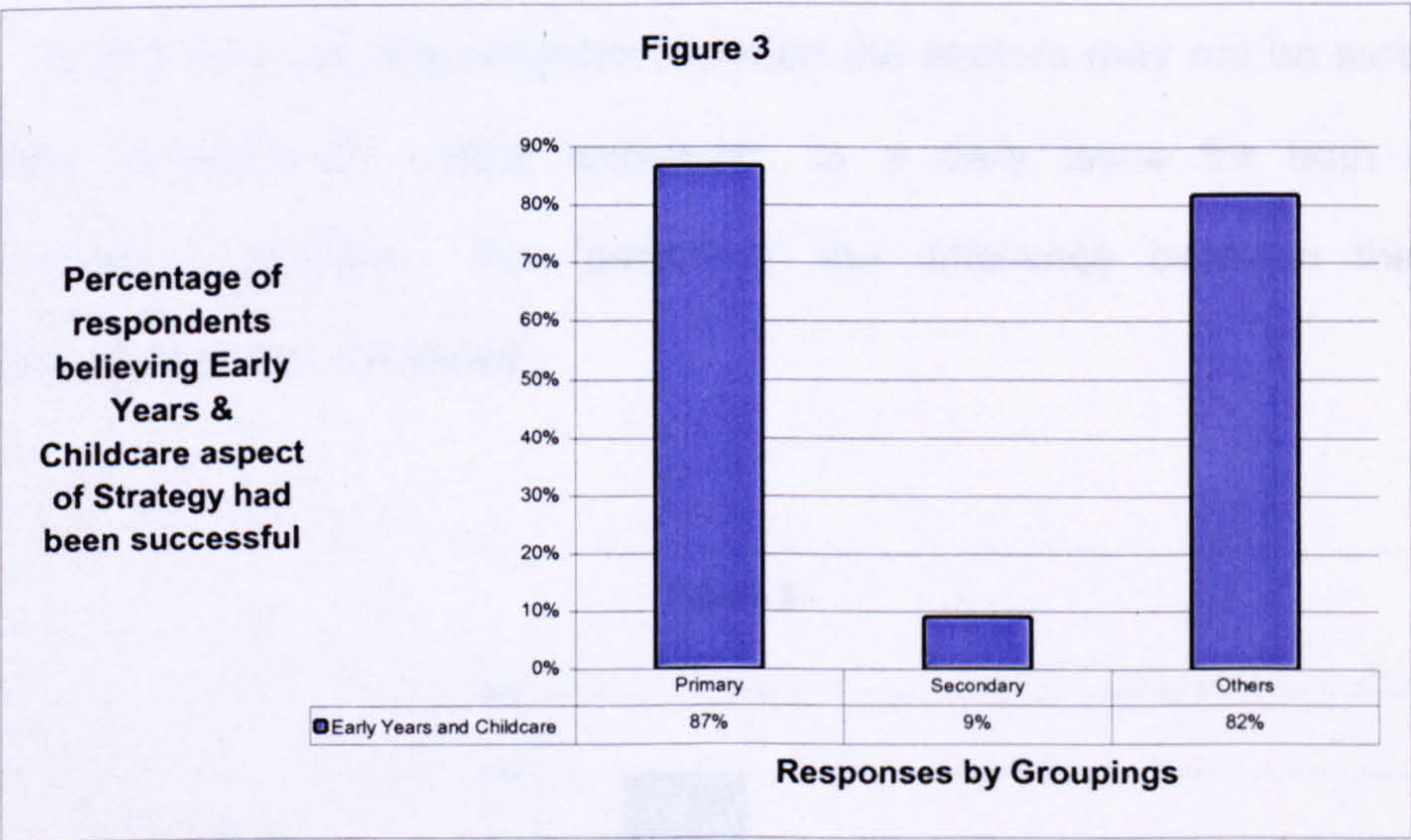
This picture provides reaffirmation of the Ofsted view (in two LEA inspections) that the implementation of the Early Years & Childcare Strategy had been successful and that it is largely on track. The rating of the School Exclusion Strategy is also not surprising, given both the rise in exclusions over the period of the Strategy and the general high temperature of behaviour as an issue, both locally and nationally. The score for Attendance, the second highest, may reflect the esteem in which staff are held rather than any significant impact from the Strategy. The relatively high approval rating for Support to Parents is surprising as the Strategy seems, from the data presented to respondents, to have had little impact on its scope. This may also reflect the general esteem in which existing provision is held.

The figure for Exclusions can be sub-divided between primary at 47% and secondary at 27%. Given the particular 'behaviour' difficulties experienced by secondary schools and their much higher exclusion rates, this is not surprising.





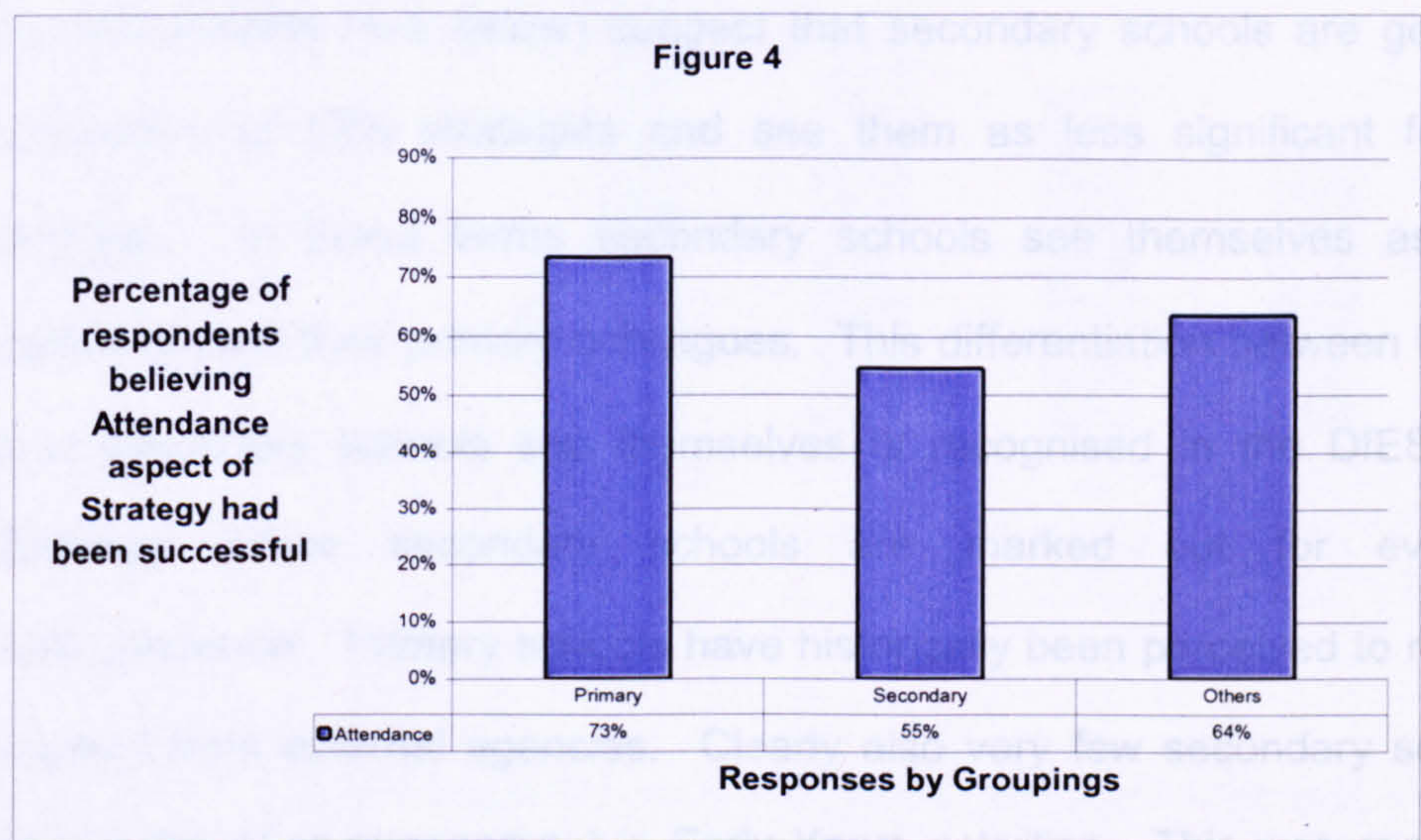
Early Years was rated a success by 60% with 87% of primary and 9% of secondary contributing to this result.



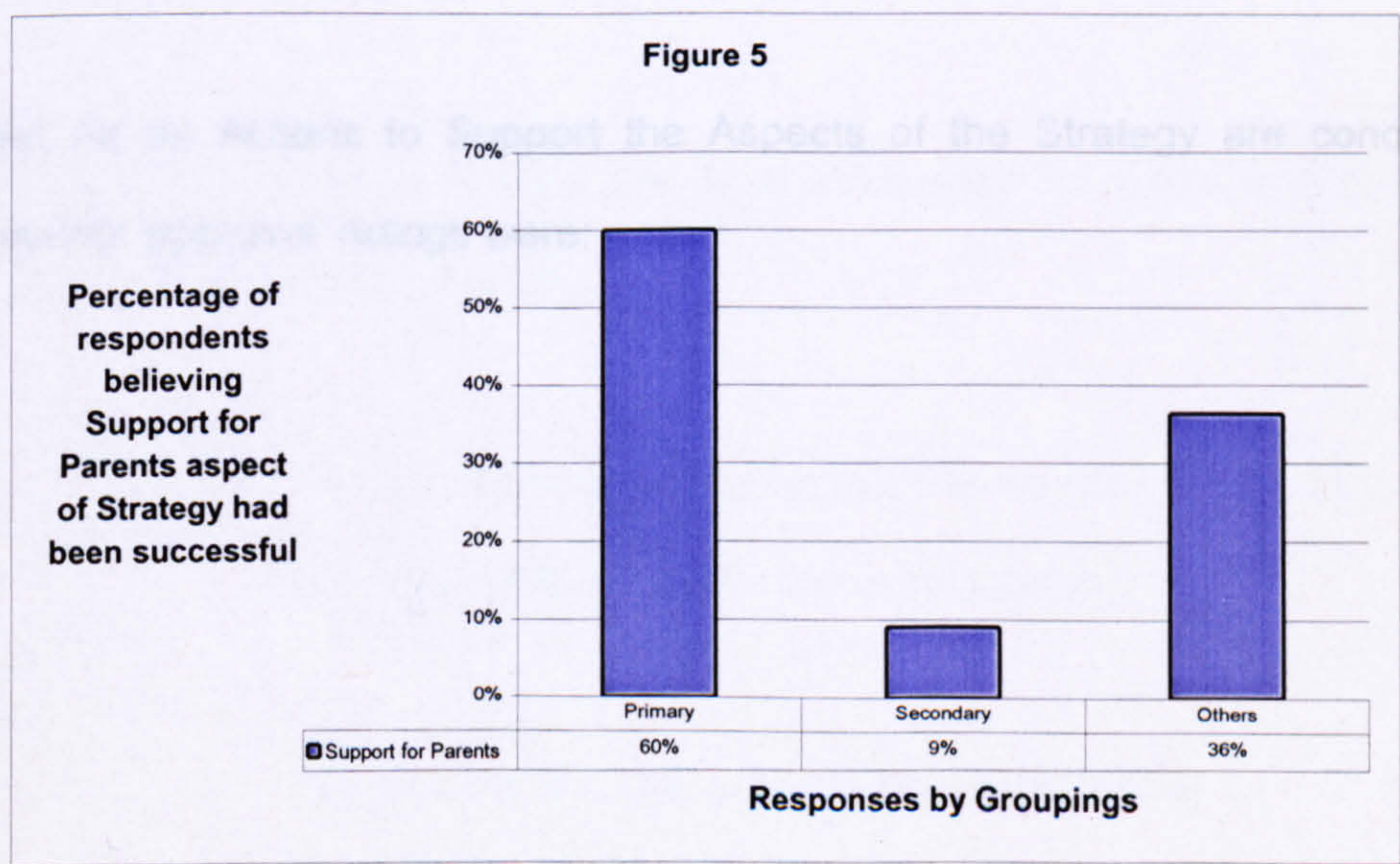
As suggested below, the expansion of Early Years & Childcare Provision has, so far, had little impact on the secondary sector. It may only be in, say, 8-10 years time that they will feel its benefits for their students. Generally, however, this picture reflects the position nationally where what is now called Sure Start is perceived as a huge success and a cornerstone on which the Every Child Matters agenda can be built.



A similar but less stark picture emerged in relation to attendance:



The lack of great differentiation between the sectors may not be surprising, given that "attendance", unlike 'exclusion', is a daily issue for both primary and secondary schools. For 'parenting' the difference between the phases of schooling is more marked:



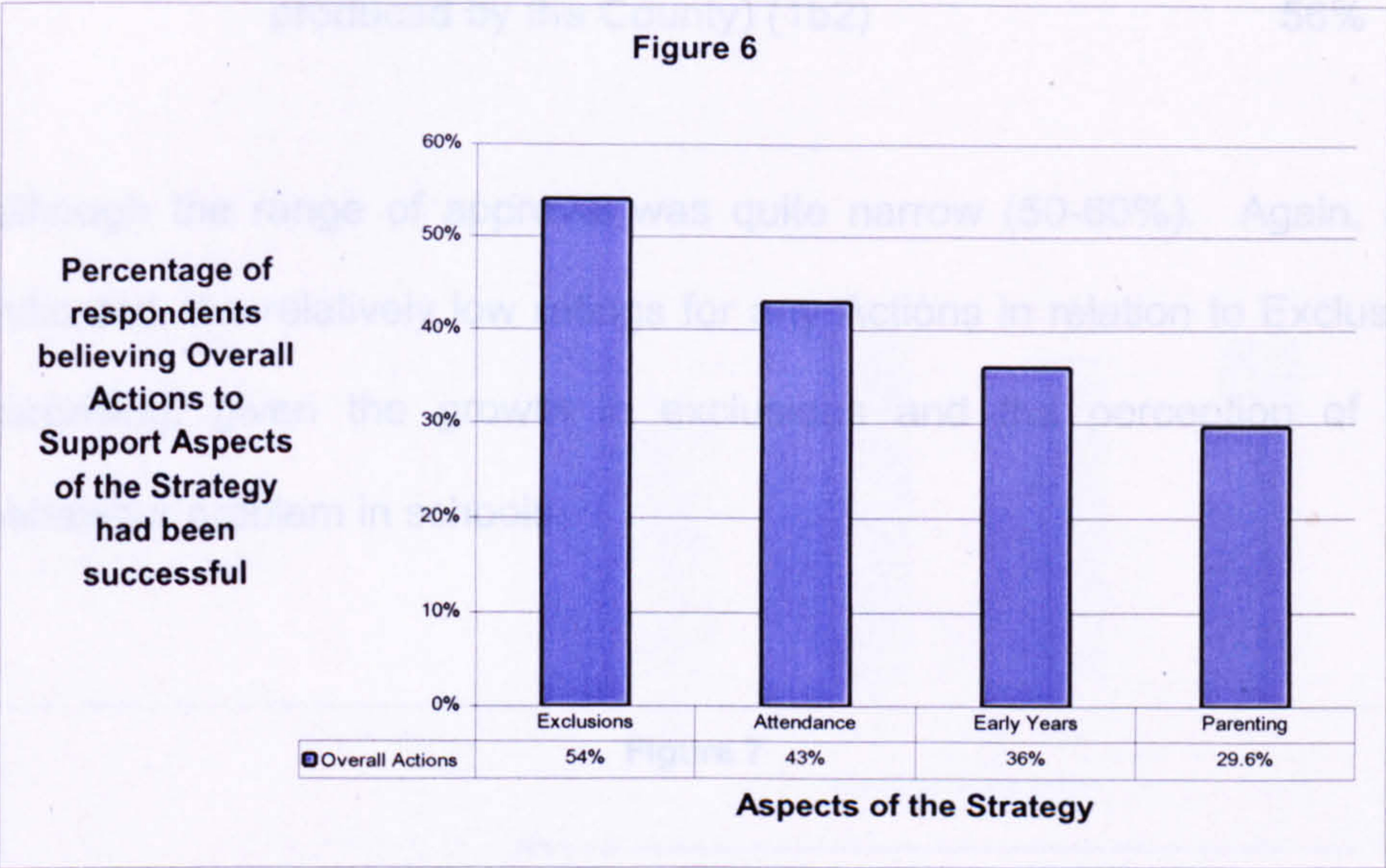


This result is not particularly surprising as provision for parents is largely restricted to those of primary age pupils. The only real exception to this is a small amount of Youth Offending Team support. Furthermore, supplementary comments offered by respondents (see below) suggest that secondary schools are generally less supportive of LEA strategies and see them as less significant for in-school success. In broad terms secondary schools see themselves as more self sufficient than their primary colleagues. This differentiation between how primary and secondary schools see themselves is recognised in the DfES Five Year Strategy where secondary schools are marked out for even greater 'independence'. Primary schools have historically been perceived to require more support from external agencies. Clearly also very few secondary schools have knowledge of or engagement in Early Years activities. This was apparent in the follow-up interviews.

### **Overall Actions**

As far as Actions to Support the Aspects of the Strategy are concerned, the overall 'approval' ratings were:





This is at first sight surprising with the (perceived) most successful strand (Early Years) receiving the second lowest approval rating for the actions taken to support it. However, this 'low' rating masks the differential views of primary and secondary schools. As with the overall judgement on 'success', some secondary schools were unable or unwilling to comment upon the success of some actions. Thus for primary schools only, the 'rating' of individual actions ranges from 47-80%.

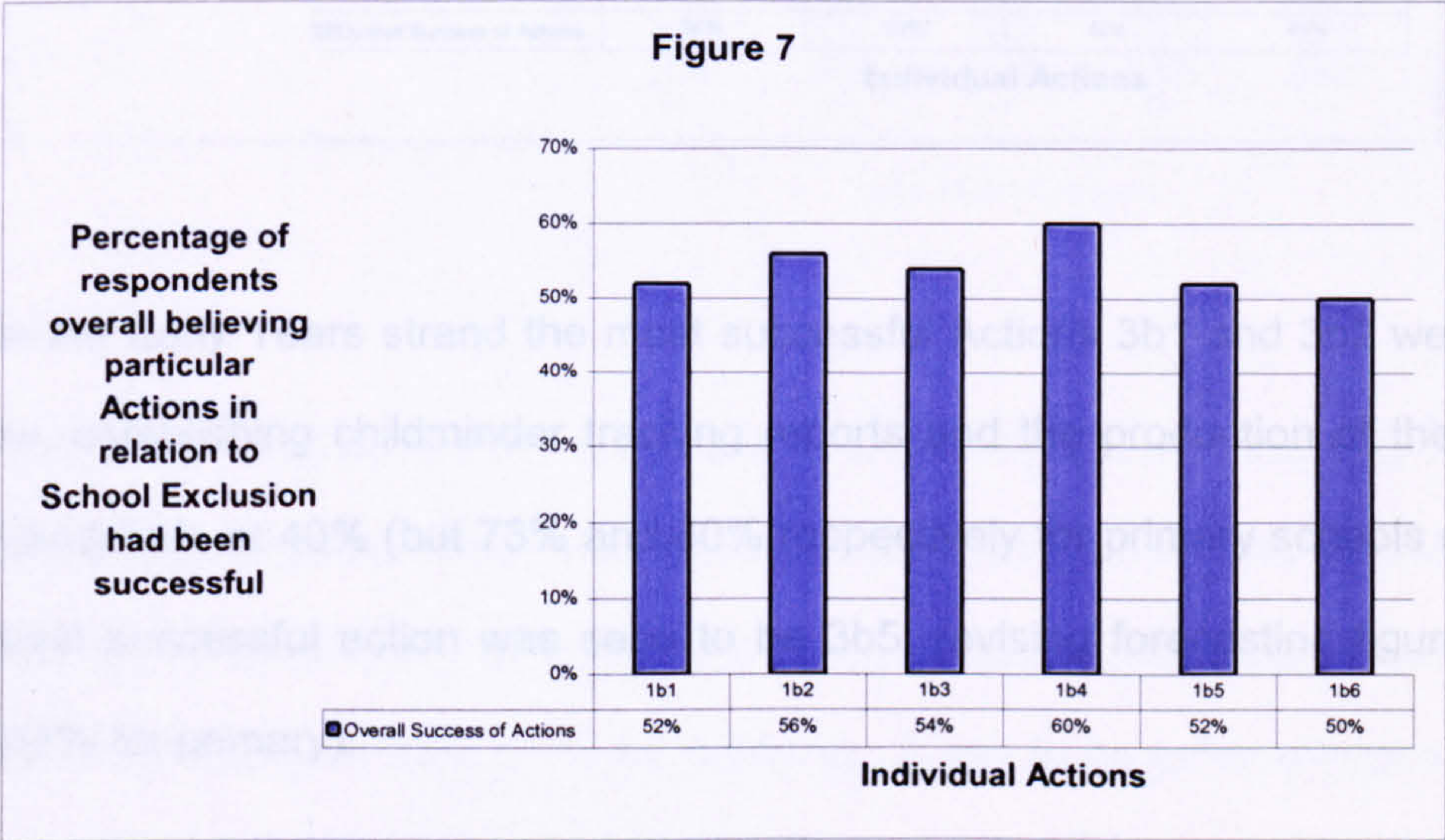
**Individual Actions**

Turning to individual Actions the most successful for Exclusions (see Figure 7 below) were perceived to be:

- the establishment of Behaviour Panels (1b4) 60%
- (to 'share' difficult pupils between schools)
- the revamp of Raising the Profile of Behaviour
- (advice and guidance produced for Schools) and
- the Behaviour Support Plan (a strategic plan



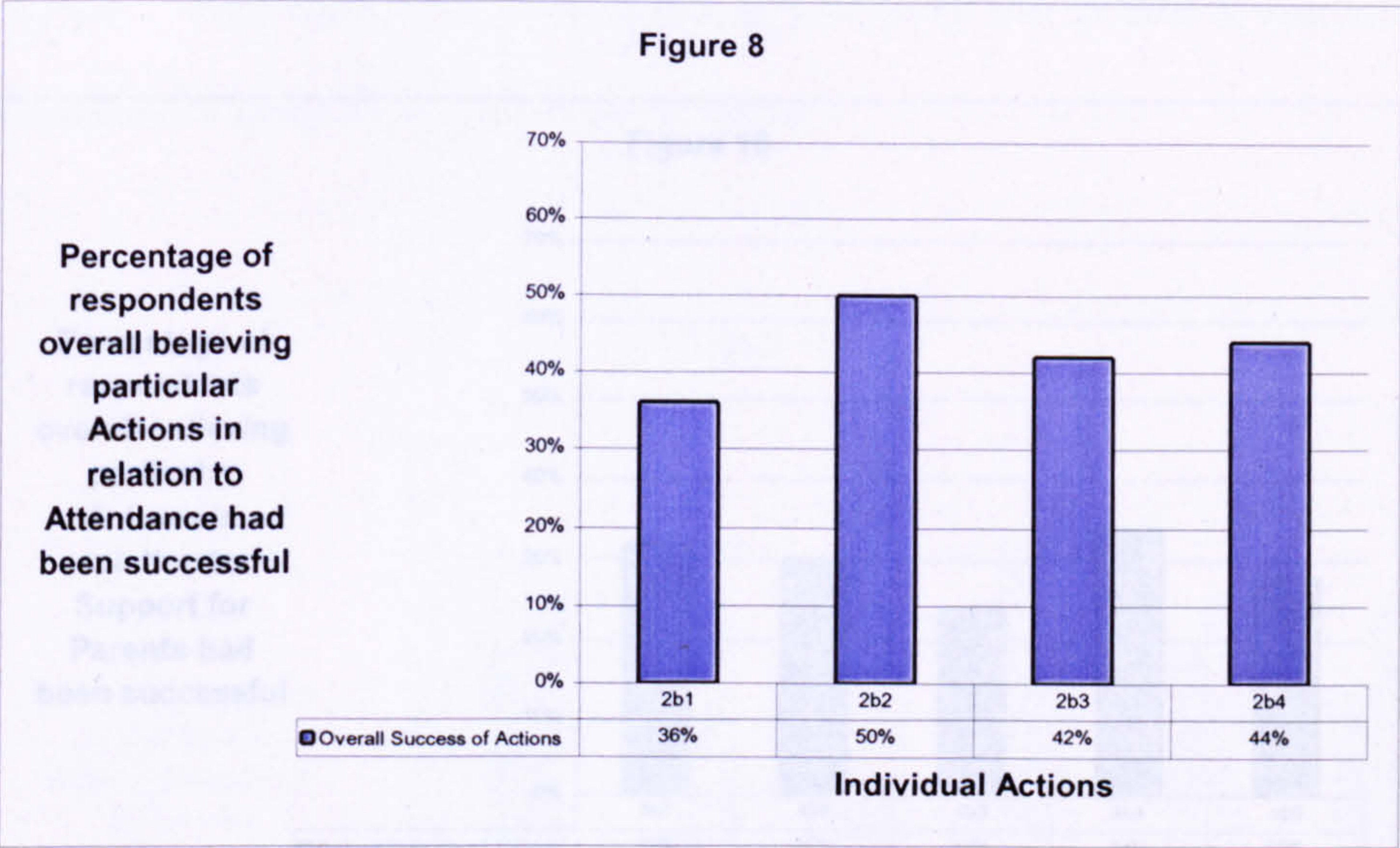
although the range of approval was quite narrow (50-60%). Again, as already indicated, the relatively low ratings for any Actions in relation to Exclusions is not surprising, given the growth in exclusions and the perception of a growing behaviour problem in schools.



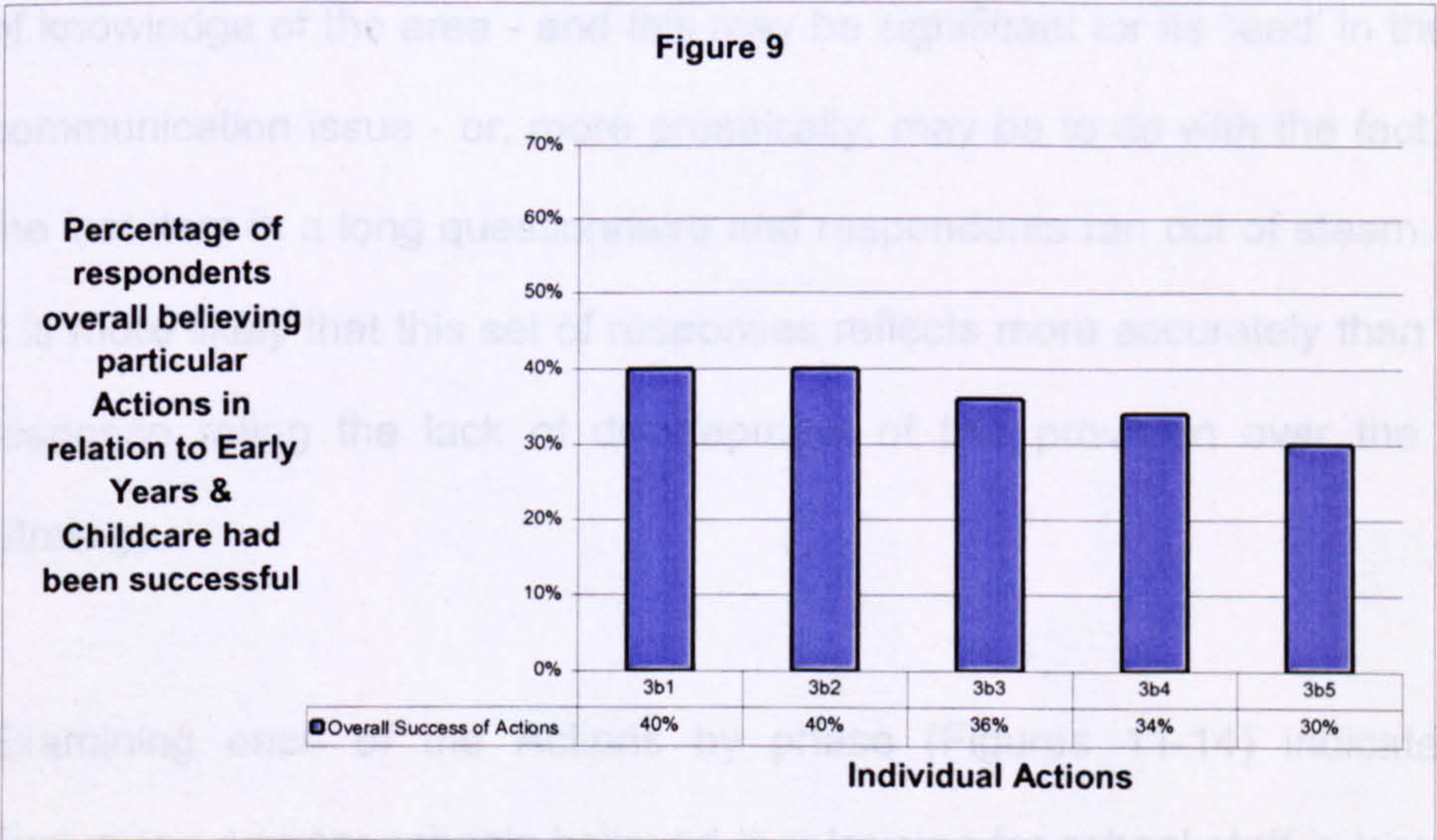
Staff training and the establishment of ‘at risk of exclusion panels’ were seen to be less significant. Specific support for individual schools (1b6) was seen statistically as the least efficacious but this is perhaps not surprising as it impinged on a very small number of schools.

For Attendance (see Figure 8 below) the most successful Action was perceived to be the audits to review processes in individual schools (2b2) (50%) and the least successful ‘targeted financial support’ (2b1) at 36% (with a range of 36-50%). This again is not surprising as it affected fewer schools. Attendance Panels and the establishment of multi-agency out of school groups received less approbation:



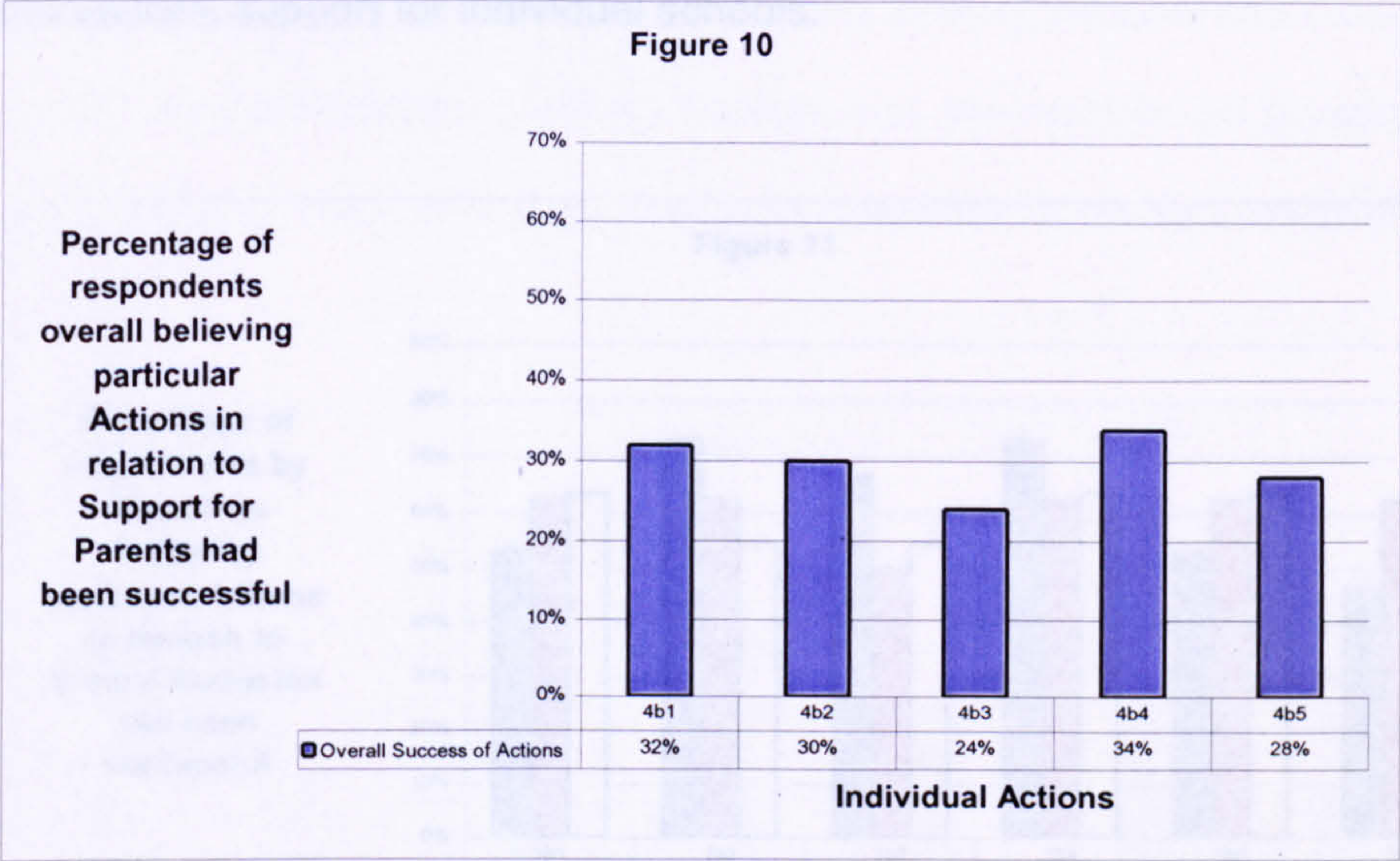


In the Early Years strand the most successful Actions 3b1 and 3b2 were seen to be, establishing childminder tracking reports and the production of the Business Handbook, at 40% (but 73% and 80% respectively for primary schools only). The least successful action was seen to be 3b5, revising forecasting figures at 30% (47% for primary):



The Support for Parents strand received the lowest overall rating for its individual Actions with a range of 24-34%:



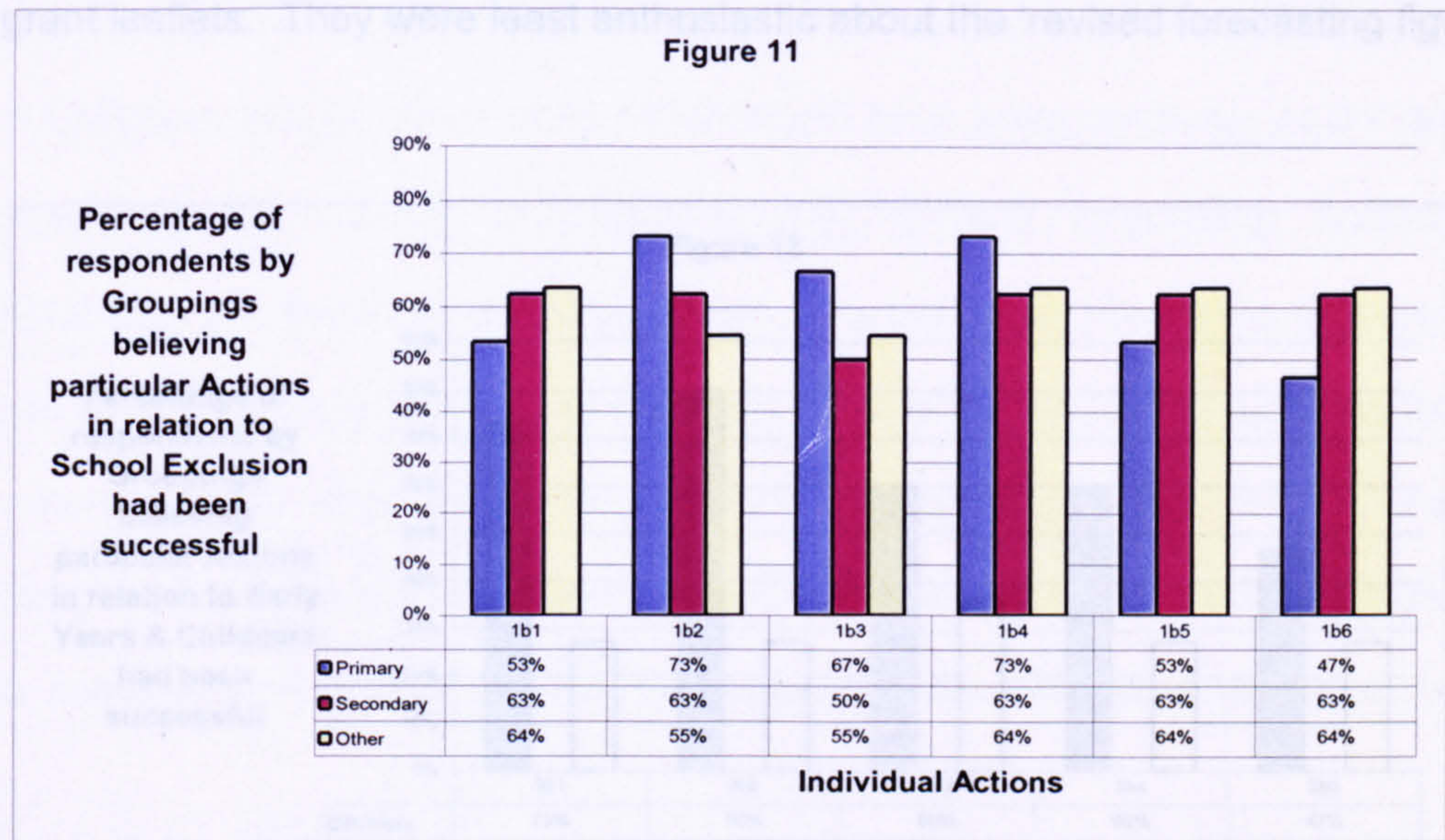


Even eliminating secondary schools from the sample raises this only to 27-53%. The most successful Action was perceived to be 4b4, closer inter-agency action at 34% (47% for primary only) and the least successful 4b3, partnership with the voluntary sector at 24% (27% for primary). It has to be acknowledged that there was a very low return in relation to this area of work. This may reflect either a lack of knowledge of the area - and this may be significant for its 'lead' in the LEA as a communication issue - or, more prosaically, may be to do with the fact that it was the last item in a long questionnaire and respondents ran out of steam. However, it is more likely that this set of responses reflects more accurately than the overall response rating the lack of development of this provision over the life of the Strategy.

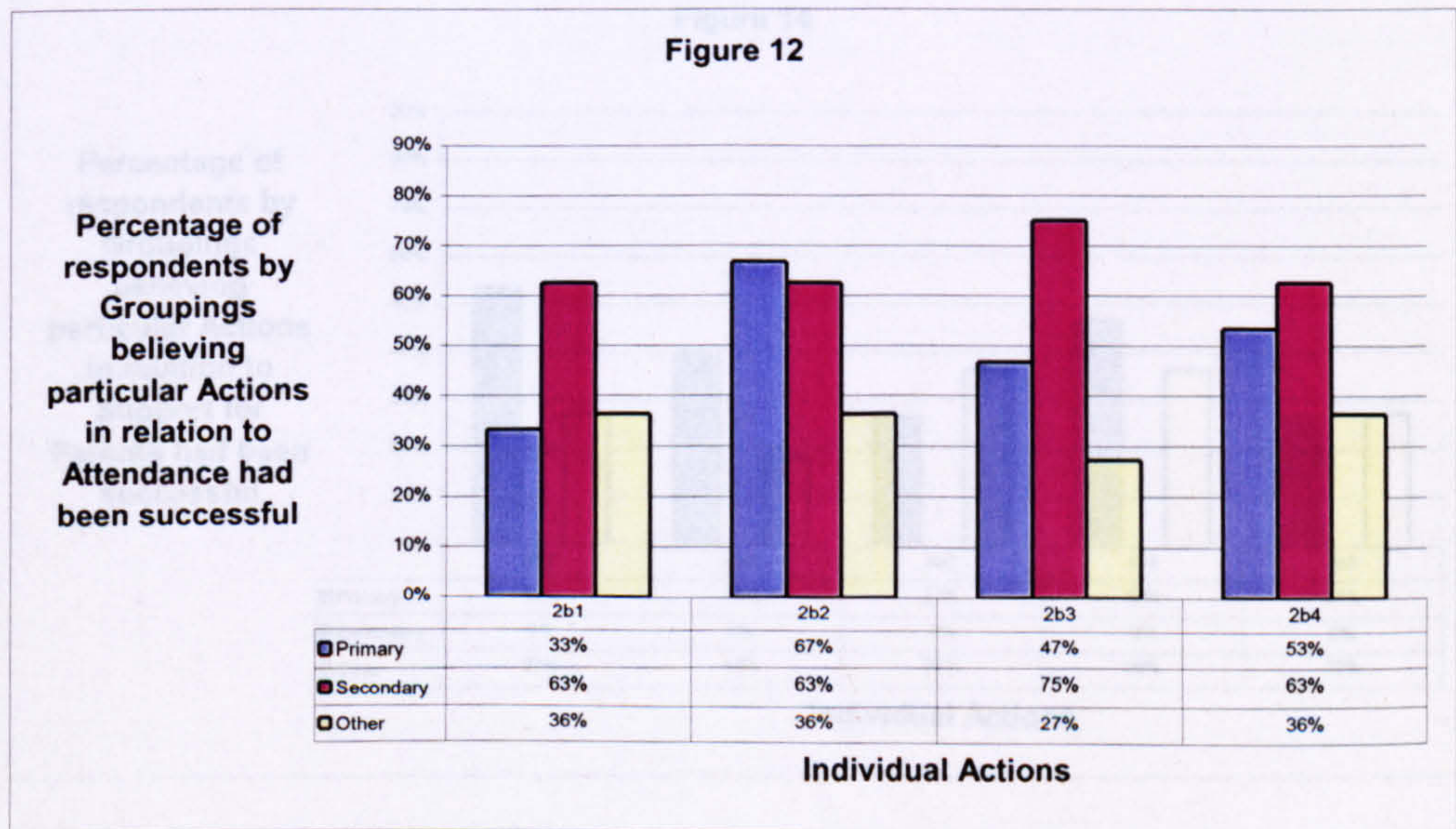
Examining each of the Actions by phase (Figures 11-14) indicates that for Exclusions primary schools believed that training for school staff is less significant but that production of the Raising the Profile on Behaviour document is more significant, as also the revamp of the PRU and the establishment of the Behaviour



Panels. They were less ‘sure’ about the value of the ‘pupils at risk’ meetings and the specific support for individual schools:



For attendance, of significance is the stronger secondary school view that targeting individual support and piloting attendance panels were supportive of the strategy as also (but less strongly so) the establishment of multi-agency out of school groups:

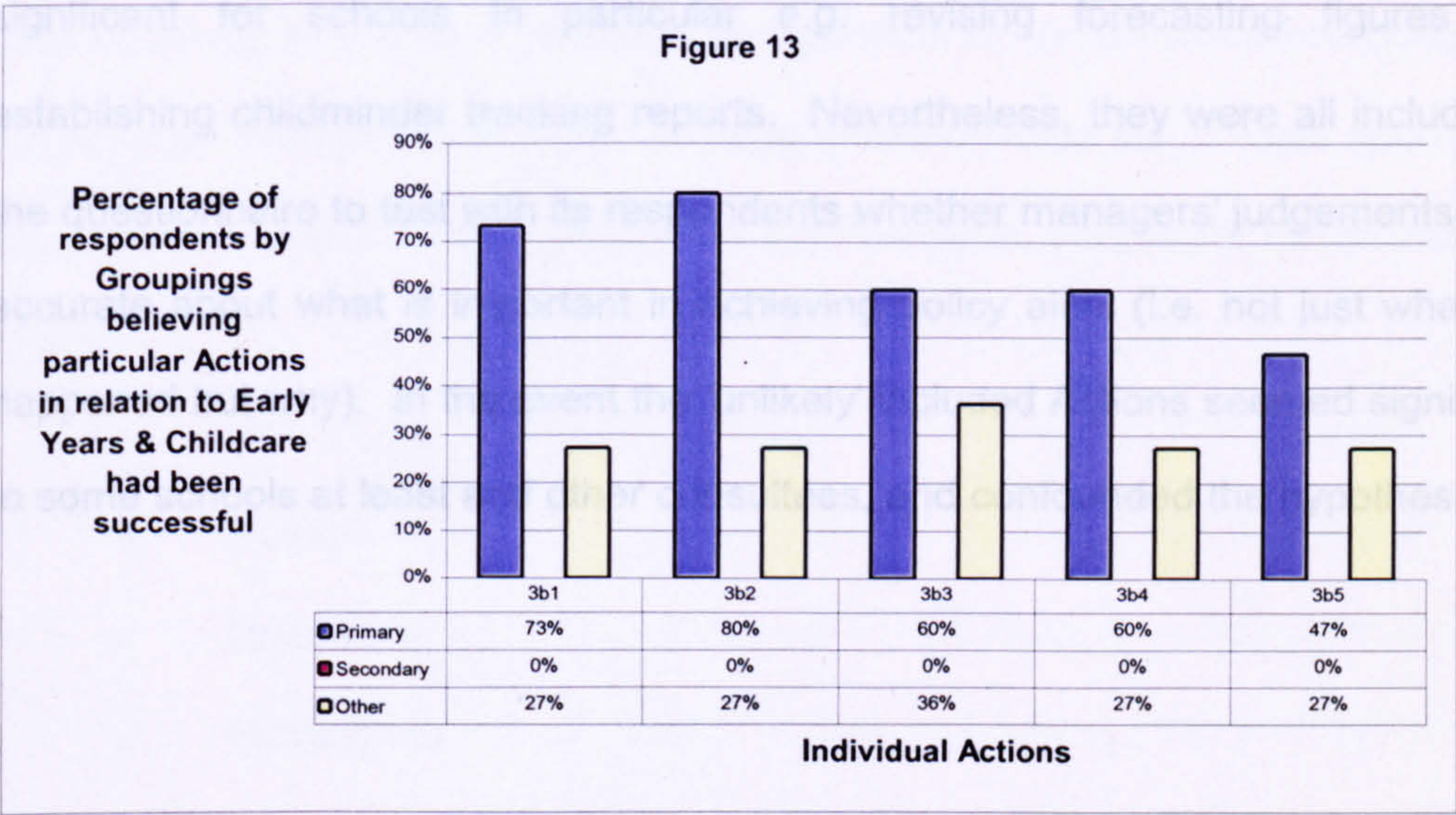




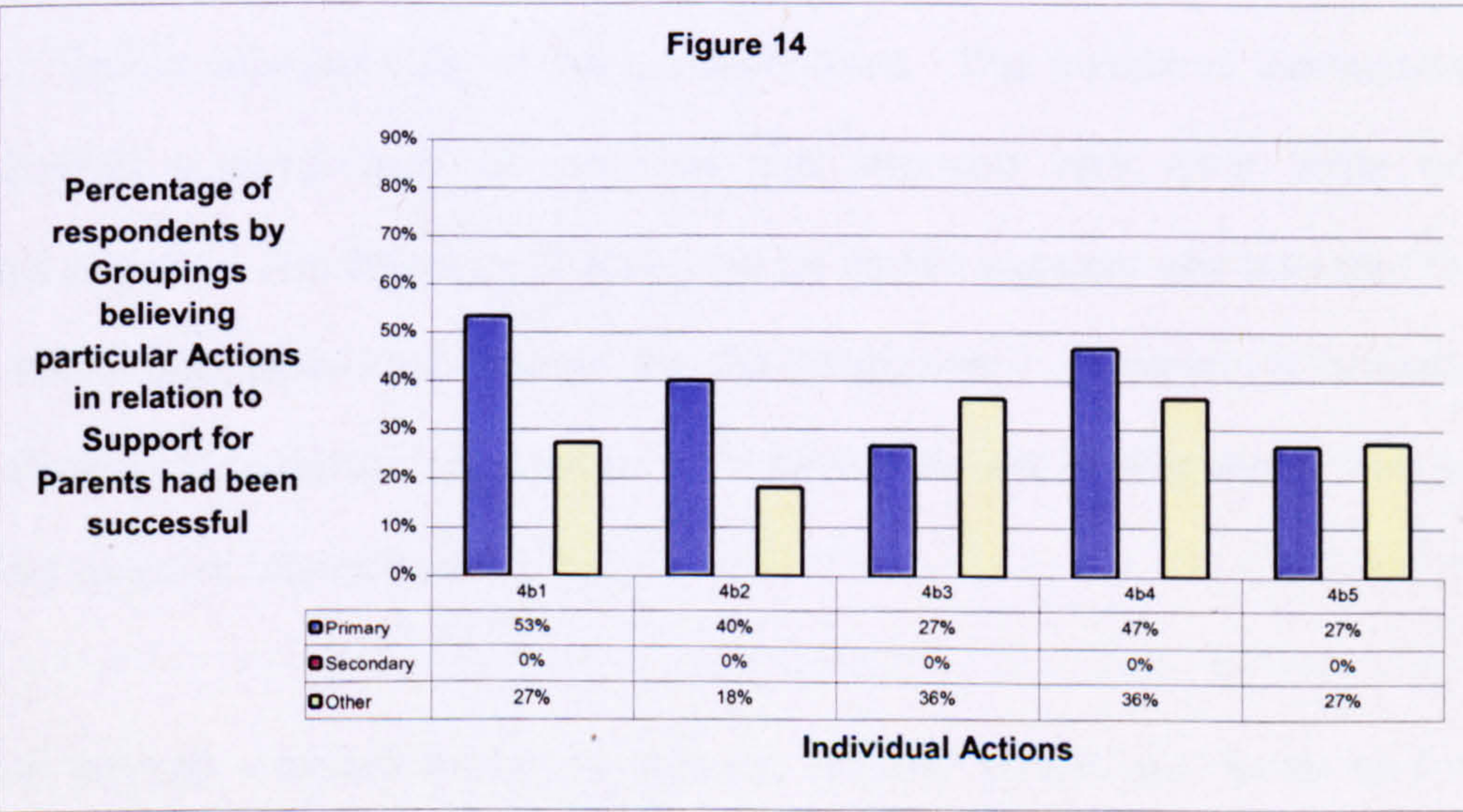
As indicated earlier, the 'Actions' included in the questionnaire for comment upon

In the Early Years part of the questionnaire primary schools had more 'praise' for establishing childminder tracking reports and the revision of nursery education grant leaflets. They were least enthusiastic about the 'revised forecasting figures':

& Childcare had not been ones which would have been obviously or immediately



For the Parenting strand primary schools believed that the most successful action was the writing of the County Policy and the least the County Conference:





As indicated earlier, the 'Actions' included in the questionnaire for comment upon had been chosen by the managers responsible for both policy and its implementation in each of the four education Aspects of the Strategy. Most of those suggested had been unsurprising. However, some of those for Early Years & Childcare had not been ones which would have been obviously or immediately significant for schools in particular e.g. revising forecasting figures and establishing childminder tracking reports. Nevertheless, they were all included in the questionnaire to test with its respondents whether managers' judgements were accurate about what is important in achieving policy aims (i.e. not just what has happened but why). In the event the 'unlikely' included Actions seemed significant to some schools at least and other consultees, and confounded the hypothesis.

## **Qualitative Data**

This data was collected as a set of 'additional comments' invited throughout the questionnaire. This approach resulted in a very wide, unconstrained set of replies which was very difficult to analyse. An attempt was made to constrain the 'data' by categorising it in a table attached as Appendix D. It has to be acknowledged that this was a rather crude affair, involving a deal of value judgements about what respondents meant. This taxonomy fell into five parts, paralleling the quantitative analysis:

- Overall
- Exclusions
- Attendance
- Early Years
- Parenting

This categorisation was not without its difficulties, given the often very individual nature of the responses. As already indicated, no effort was made to constrain the 'additional comments' in the questionnaires. The questions themselves had provided a great deal of structure and imposed very clear limits on the respondents. The invitation to elaborate on earlier answers was intended to elicit insights otherwise unobtainable via the instrument. However, it proved very difficult to categorise and analyse an idiosyncratic set of responses from a very wide range of respondents.

The sample included heads of nursery, primary (infant and junior and 4-11), special and secondary schools, County Council Officers from a range of



professions, representatives of the Community and Voluntary Sector and elected members. The methodology was threefold. In the first instance a summary of each comment was written onto an index card. It was decided to record each time a comment was made in a questionnaire. When a respondent made it more than once it was recorded more than once as this was often in relation to different questions. The repetition of the comment was taken as an indication of its significance. It seemed sensible, therefore, to give weight to this in the recording. Where comments seemed to have some connection they were included on the same card or in the same group of cards. Some judgements had to be made about the 'connectivity' of comments. Frequently this was relatively easy. This is reflected in those situations where a comment has a high overall score (e.g. those relating to resources). However, some comments were or were close to being 'one-offs'. This will be apparent from the summary scoring table. After this first 'run' the comments were grouped together into an 'overall' category and under headings relating to the four subsections of the questionnaire, i.e:

- Exclusions
- Attendance
- Early Years & Childcare
- Parenting

In order to test the validity of the categorisation of the comments a second analysis was undertaken some two months after the original exercise. While there were some minor differences between the results of the two iterations, the overall balance of comment remained broadly similar. The main difference was an increase in the number of categories of response. This can be attributed to an attempt to be more rigorous in the second run and to avoid any suggestion of

false categorisation. It is important to stress that there was also a problem with the relatively small number of comments offered. It is very difficult in such circumstances to be confident that they are in any way representative. Nevertheless, they do seem to offer additional insights into various partners' views of the success of the County's Social Inclusion Strategy and deserve to be recorded and given some weight. Finally their overall validity was triangulated in the subsequent interviews.

### **Overall Findings**

Perhaps the most illuminating general comment was that made 43 times (see Appendix D, 1. Overall), referring to a lack of knowledge as a 'bar' to completing the questionnaire either in part or total. The general spread of this response had four peaks, in the nursery, infant, primary and 'other' categories. No secondary school offered this comment. It was possible to discern from the responses generally, in particular from the apologies for not being able to offer comment on various matters, a real desire to be helpful but a lack of awareness of either the Strategy or the various individual actions which had been set in place to achieve its success. There may well be a learning point here for the authors of the Strategy about communication with and engagement of parties on whom it will rely for support in its operationalisation and success. Riley & Rustique Forrester (2002 p69) emphasize the need for good communication and awareness raising strategies when trying to promote inclusion. It may be, therefore, significant that the area of work which received most approbation from its natural constituents, Early Years, is the one which has arguably put in place the most sophisticated communication strategy to publicise its activity. This included its Childcare Information Service, a regular newsletter and networking through the Early Years



Development & Childcare Partnership and its sub groups, but also the appointment of a dedicated marketing and publicity officer.

The other general comment was that of not being able to give the time the survey needed. This occurred only once in the returns but may have been a significant reason for the lack of response by 50% of those in the sample.

### **Exclusions**

Respondents offered a wide range of individual comments (see Appendix D, 2. Exclusions). The general pattern was not surprising and in some ways helpful for those driving this part of the Strategy.

In the first instance comment was categorised into fifty headings, which can be found in the table in Appendix D. However, in broad terms the comments could be gathered into six smaller groupings:

- national agendas
- resources
- support from the LEA
- school intervention
- parents
- work with other agencies

As far as the national agenda is concerned there was a relatively minority view that the standards agenda and league tables had promoted exclusion. This view was more prevalent in the 'others' section than within schools. It was suggested

also that DfES changes to the exclusions procedures had caused an increase in exclusions. Nevertheless two respondents thought that a national emphasis on inclusion had been helpful. There was relatively little comment on the national over-representation of BME in exclusion. This may be because of the particular ethnic make up of Someshire where the incidence particularly of African Caribbean pupils is very low: there are only some 200 of them spread across Someshire's 247 schools. There were quite mixed views about the number of boys (as opposed to girls) excluded. Some thought more work needed to be done with girls.

Resources or lack of them were seen as a significant issue in a number of cases, although one 'other' category respondent noted that significant additional LEA resources had been put into this area of work. In particular the work of the Pupil Reintegration Unit (PRU) was referred to positively. Expenditure on residential provision was seen as wasteful by one school.

Views on support from the LEA were mixed. A majority of nursery through to primary schools thought the LEA had provided good support. 'Secondary' respondents were much less complimentary. Particular initiatives were praised such as the introduction of Behaviour Support Panels, the work of The Education of Looked After Children (TELAC) project, Intercultural Curriculum Support Service (ICSS) and nurture groups. There was criticism of the amount of support available from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). There was a view also that LEA documents and systems had little impact on exclusion figures, although this view was not universally held.



Perhaps encouragingly there was significant comment on the amount and effectiveness of intervention in schools. In a number of different ways schools acknowledged that 'exclusion' is a school management issue. There was, however, no reference to teaching and learning styles seen by Riley 2003 p17 as significant, only procedures and practices. A number of such in-school strategies were referred to and some belief expressed that schools are becoming more inclusive. However, a minority 'external view', expressed as disappointment, was that schools were not required consistently to reduce exclusions. Two respondents saw exclusion as a societal rather than school issue.

There was some acknowledgement of the need to work with parents but this did not figure as large as might have been expected. This was seen as more important in nursery through primary (including special) schools than in secondary schools. This overall finding was tested as a finding in the follow-up interviews.

Work with other agencies was seen variously as 'necessary', 'improving' and 'difficult'. As with other issues this was viewed less positively in secondary than in other schools. In a sense none of these conclusions are surprising, reflecting what is generally the 'zeitgeist' on exclusions. The whole of the Government's Change for Children agenda is posited on a belief that agencies currently do not work as well together as they should to support children, young people and families. Nor is it surprising that secondary schools have a more negative view on a range of issues than do their primary colleagues. After all it is they who, they would argue, face the most difficult challenges in relation to inclusion and who are responsible for the vast majority of exclusions. Also, as has been suggested earlier, secondary schools see themselves (and are encouraged by Government to do so) as more self sufficient than their primary colleagues.

As a footnote it is worth recording that few commented on the lack of progress in reducing exclusions. Indeed some wanted to argue that either the trend was positive (against the evidence) or represented 'containment' (a more sustainable viewpoint) against a rising tide of potential exclusions in the County's schools.

### **Attendance**

For Attendance, the initial twenty-six categories of comment can be fitted into similar groupings to those used for Exclusions. As far as the national scene is concerned, there was, again, a view that national league tables for schools were a hindrance but that it was helpful that attendance was clearly high on the national agenda both for the DfES and the Home Office. Socio-economic factors were seen as significant but gender and ethnicity were not seen as significant factors in good or poor attendance.

Resources were seen as an issue but mainly in relation to the availability of the staff of the Education Social Work Service (ESWS). LEA services were seen as helpful although changes to the structure and ways of working by the ESWS were not regarded as positively by all respondents. This was a reference to refocussing of ESWS resources on schools with relatively high levels of non attendance, so that many schools no longer had a named Education Social Worker or an allocation of his or her time. Work, it was suggested by one respondent, needed to be done with travellers.

In-school intervention was again regarded (by schools) as most effective and important. Again secondary schools tended to see LEA inputs as less significant



and supportive than those initiatives promoted in school. Work with parents was regarded as important by primary schools but not mentioned, except in relation to the difficulties caused by term-time family holidays, by secondary schools. A small number of respondents referred to the importance of inter-agency work.

Again, in the context of Someshire and education in general none of these findings are surprising.

### **Early Years**

It is with Early Years that the Social Inclusion Strategy received its warmest endorsement. This may in part be because of the obvious lack of involvement of secondary schools in this area of work. A consistent message running through the first two aspects of the Strategy was the relative independence of the secondary sector and its more strongly held view that in-school activity is more significant and effective than that by external agencies. Nursery, primary and special schools consistently, as indicated elsewhere, seemed to feel more able or willing to acknowledge the role of the LEA in their activity.

Again, the twenty-three initial categories of comment were reshaped into the six common themes. There was relatively little, if any, comment on the national agenda. The impact of additional resources (largely but not wholly national) was acknowledged and there was no suggestion that they were not sufficient to meet their aims.

Support from the LEA was acknowledged strongly. As already indicated, there was no negativity about the LEA role and no suggestion that the initiative had

been school-led or would be better so led. The role and importance of parents was acknowledged without negativity.

Perhaps most important for Government and the proponents of social inclusion there was a clear suggestion that the provision of high quality nursery provision has had a differential impact on those of low socio-economic status, on travellers, SEN pupils and (with one dissenter) on BME pupils. All of this suggests that Early Years (& Childcare) has been the most successful aspect of the Education Department's contribution to the County Council's Social Inclusion Strategy. The Government also might see this as an endorsement for the priority it has given early years education and childcare both in the recent past and its new ten year childcare strategy. Perhaps the only caveat to this conclusion is the relatively small number of comments on which it is based.

### **Parenting**

This was and probably remains the least developed of the four Aspects of the Strategy discussed in this thesis. As with the three previous aspects it was possible to group comment under six headings. There was no reference to any national agenda on this issue except again to the negative impact of SATs and league tables. Indeed there was reference to the need to raise the profile of the work and its importance. It was seen as beneficial to BME families and parents of pupils with SEN. Boys were seen to benefit particularly from support to their parents. Nevertheless more work needs to be undertaken with these groups. Resources were seen as an issue and disappointment was expressed at the lack of increase in the number of parents centres and outreach work from them. There was a positive reference to the input from the Children's Fund to this area of work.



Nevertheless, the work of the LEA was regarded as supportive with positive comments on the parents centres, the work of the Intercultural Curriculum Support Service, colleges and Community Education.

School intervention was less frequently referred to and the subject was not commented on at all by secondary schools.

Work with other agencies was seen as important but there was an acknowledgement that they would need additional resources to be able to engage on 'parenting' work more consistently.

### **Reflection**

Before moving on to look at the follow up interviews undertaken it is important to reflect on the success of the use of the questionnaire in this study. It will be apparent that its development and use involved a great deal of effort on the part of both its author and its recipients. Its products or outcomes probably do not justify the extent of the input. This is for at least two reasons:

- as indicated twice already, the numbers of respondents did not allow any sophisticated statistical analysis
- perhaps even more importantly the questionnaire was intended to test with recipients the judgements of Local Authority Officers about why progress on social inclusion had been made. That in itself might have been reasonable. However, stretching the use of the instrument to ask those filling it in to suggest themselves why progress had been made on

inclusion was a step too far. It was to use a questionnaire for a purpose for which it was not fit.

### **Interview Analyses**

Interviews were conducted with each of the fourteen respondents to the questionnaires who had indicated a willingness to be interviewed. This group comprised:

- Two heads and one deputy of secondary schools
- Five heads of primary schools
- One junior head
- The head of a special school
- The director of a parent support agency
- A representative of the voluntary and community sector who was also the chair of governors of two primary schools
- A senior manager from Social Services
- A policy officer from the Chief Executive's Department of the County Council.

The workload involved in this exercise was very significant, involving fourteen hour-long meetings and travelling to schools the length and breadth of Someshire as well, of course, as the follow-up writing up and analysis of the interviews. In anticipation of potential workload issues consideration was given to interviewing only a sample of the fourteen but in the end it was decided that it would give a 'truer' picture of respondents' views if the whole group were interviewed. It would



have been difficult also to decide whom to leave in and whom to omit from the group.

The purpose of the interview was to share the tentative conclusions of the researcher to that date and to test with the interviewees whether those conclusions 'chimed' with their reality. This is the triangulation referred to earlier. They could say that they agreed with those conclusions or not, or could indicate that they had no opinion in relation to each or all of them. Also they were invited to comment on the four areas of activity which the Local Education Authority had sponsored in the Social Inclusion Strategy.

The format of the interview was to be:

- thank the interviewee for agreeing to be interviewed
- emphasize the anonymity of the process
- obtain permission to use a tape recorder to record the interview  
(but see below)
- explain the purpose of the research
- as indicated above, share the interim conclusions of the research derived from the questionnaire circulated to a range of individuals
- obtain further feedback from the interviewees on the conclusions or other matters they wished to raise
- again thank the interviewee
- offer each interviewee sight of the final conclusions of the research when published in 2005.

In the event the tape recorder failed at the first interview and it had to be recorded manually. This proved to be a relatively easy process (ie the manual recording), a comfortable one for both interviewer and interviewee, and so the same procedure was used in each of the interviews. An anonymised example of the record of an interview is attached at Appendix F. The structure against which the interviews was analysed is set out in chapter 3 above. There follows an analysis of interviewees' responses to the initial findings of the research. Numbers in brackets are the numbers of interviewees holding particular views. A summary of these responses is also attached as Appendix F.

### **Exclusions**

As far as 'exclusions' were concerned, there was very little positive support for the views that its importance on the national agenda or LEA support had been helpful in moving towards a reduction in their number. For the former only one primary school head expressed a positive view, with the remaining interviewees either holding no view (9) or a negative view (4). More interviewees expressed the view that other national agendas, such as league tables for school test and examination results contributed to the rise in exclusions, e.g.:

"League tables (in relation to exclusions) are a problem, particularly for schools in my situation (in a deprived area)" (primary head), and:

"League tables often mean schools take wrong decisions (on exclusions)" (LA Officer).



There was a fairly similar split for 'LEA support': 2 'positive', 6 'no view' and 6 'negative':

"Any support I have received from the LEA was in a sense too late. LEA staff were also out of touch with the chalk face" (primary head).

For the contrary indicators there was some support (3) for the view that the LEA 'wasted' resources in placing excluded pupils out County, e.g.:

"I had a child at ----- School who went to a residential school after year 5. This money is going in the wrong direction and should be spent on preventative work" (primary head), and:

"Out County money should be spent in primary schools on prevention" (secondary head)

but the majority (10) expressed no view on this matter. A slightly larger number (5) believed that lack of resources was an issue in relation to exclusions but a majority (9) expressed no view on this. This was the only matter in this section where there was an apparent divergence of view between primary and secondary schools where 4 of the 5 expressing a view that lack of resources was an issue were primary school heads. No secondary interviewee highlighted this as an issue. Perhaps the most significant feedback from the interviewees which had emerged from the questionnaire was on the view that work with parents in relation to (potential) excludees was not significant. Eleven of the interviewees disagreed with this conclusion with only three not expressing a positive view either way on the matter, e.g.:

"Working with parents is very important if schools are to achieve success with young people with behaviour problems" (primary head), and:

"Work with parents is absolutely crucial" (special head).

In a way this was not a surprising result: the views expressed in the questionnaire had been. It is almost a matter of 'apple pie and motherhood' that work with the families of students is important. To have denied that it was as important, if not more so with 'vulnerable' young people would have been to deny an almost "universal truth". The difference of views expressed between the questionnaires and the interviews may have been to do with the respective natures of the two instruments. The questionnaire may have evoked a more 'honest' view which it was difficult to sustain face to face with the researcher. Indeed, when attempts were made to tease out how this work with families was undertaken in the individual schools, it was difficult to do so and was, it seemed, given less priority than was work with parents of non attendees. The reasons for this are no doubt complex but some clues were offered by two interviewees:

"Behaviour is a more difficult subject to broach with parents. Parents feel threatened by the suggestion their children are misbehaving" (primary head), and:

"Parents see it (criticism of a child's behaviour) as a criticism of what they do" (secondary head).



The overwhelming conclusion of this section, however, was confirmation by 10 of the 14 interviewees that the most significant factor around exclusions was in-school activity, e.g.:

"Behaviour is top of my agenda. I have worked with staff to implement in-schools strategies to deal with behaviour and self-esteem problems" (primary head),

"School exclusions have fallen dramatically as a result of actions I have taken. A consistent behaviour policy in schools is significant as also overall practice in relation to behaviour" (primary head), and:

"We've improved things by playing the longer game. We have a system and stick to it" (secondary head).

The remaining 4 expressed no strong view.

### **Attendance**

As indicated above, in-school work seemed to be about procedures rather than teaching and learning styles, e.g.:

"Attendance is improving because of things we've done in schools, including simple rewards and praise systems" (primary head),

"In the absence of support from the ESW Service I've had to develop my own, in-school strategies celebrating and rewarding success for classes and individuals" (primary head), and:

"The ESW Service is a waste of space. Things got better .... through the school's efforts" (secondary head).

a matter emphasized as important by the National Audit Office in its 2005 study (p3). Nevertheless, these schools did lay emphasis on the importance of school values and sign up to them (see Riley 2003 p72, National Audit Office 2005 p7). For attendance there was a similar pattern of opinion about whether the Government placing it on the national agenda had been a significant factor in the reduction in non attendance in the County. Only one interviewee thought that this had been the case: one thought it had not with 12 expressing no strong view on the matter. As far as LEA led school audits were concerned, no interviewee expressed a positive or negative view on the matter. They either had not occurred in these schools or had not been helpful. Of those who expressed a view on the significance of engaging parents on attendance issues (4) all thought it important, e.g.:

"Targeting of support for parents is vitally important on projects to support them: lack of focus had resulted in failure" (primary head).

The remainder (10) expressed no view. However, it was apparent in the interviews that schools have generally much more elaborated systems for dealing with, chasing up, non attenders than they do for dealing with behaviour issues. While it is likely that some of school students will figure in both groups, it appears



that schools put less effort into retaining pupils who, in broad terms, might be described as having behavioural issues. Interagency work was regarded as important by 6 of the interviewees, e.g.:

"Interagency work is helpful, like the school nurse who follows up health related attendance issues" (primary head).

and unimportant by only 1, with the remainder (7) not expressing a view on the matter. However, individuals' experiences of interagency work was variable from very positive to very difficult, e.g.:

"Some social workers are excellent: others are rubbish. Meetings with social workers are long and slow. Sometimes feedback from the meetings is a long time coming: sometimes it doesn't occur" (primary head).

As indicated above, there was agreement that in-school activity was significant with 11 supporting the view and the remainder (3) not expressing a view. Within the contrary indicators there was not a widely held view that lack of resources for the Education Social Work Service (ESWS) was an issue with only 2 interviewees (both 'outside school') endorsing this opinion. The remainder (12) offered no opinion on the matter. It may be that this spread of opinion was linked to interviewees' opinions of the structures and processes of the ESWS. Nine of them thought they were unhelpful with only one ('outside school') taking the contrary view.

## **Early Years**

There was no negative opinion expressed about the contribution of Early Years to inclusion, indeed only expressions of support such as: "Brilliant" and "Early Years is great" (primary head and LA Officer). The nearest that interviewees came to expressing a criticism was to suggest that it could not help but be a success given the amount of money given to it locally and nationally, e.g.:

"If all the strategies had been that well funded, there would be no problem. Given the resources that Early Years enjoyed, it should have been successful" (primary head).

7 interviewees believed that having Early Years on the national agenda had been helpful. Of the 7 who did not express an opinion, 3 were in secondary schools where they acknowledged either lack of knowledge of this sector or had not yet experienced its impact feeding through to their sector. There was an identical pattern for the issue of resources. There had been no 'contrary indicators' for this.

## **Parenting**

For 'parenting' there was strong support for working with parents (10), e.g.:

"There is a need for multi agency support for parents - there is a need for parents to take control" (primary head),

"Parenting support is desperately needed in this (deprived) area" (primary head), and:



"Even in a middle class school like mine parenting can be an issue for some, particularly for those whose children have special educational needs" (primary head).

with nobody expressing a contrary view. Secondary schools, however, with one exception, did not express a view on this matter. Eight thought that lack of resources had inhibited the success of this initiative with six not expressing a view. There was a similar pattern about the lack of expansion of parents centres, e.g.:

"I wish I could have parenting classes from the Centre in my school. There's a real deficit in parenting skills in this area" (primary head).

6 thought it significant and 8 did not express a view. Overall the enthusiasm for support for parents was encapsulated by one interviewee who said:

"If you don't get parenting right, forget it!" (LA Officer).

The following Chapter draws together some conclusions from this Chapter and preceding pages.

## **Reflection**

Before moving on to this next stage it is perhaps worth making a similar point about the interviews to that made about the conclusions drawn from the data in the questionnaire. The commentary offered on the interviews needs a health warning attached to it. Although it is possible to discern some patterns in the

comments made, the overall number of interviewees and responses is relatively small. Their significance, therefore, must be treated with some caution. The conclusions in the next Chapter do not depend for their validity on the data from the interviews any more than they do on that derived from the questionnaires returned.



## **5. Conclusion**

As indicated at the outset, this research is concerned with developing an understanding of the concept of social inclusion, its significance generally and in particular for the current United Kingdom Government, the growth of exclusion over time and how inclusion can be promoted. It has set out to investigate these questions by:

- exploring the term in the literature over time
- examining its use in the political arena in recent years
- as a piece of additional reflective inquiry, looking at how one County Council developed a Social Inclusion Strategy. This offered a context in which to consider the research questions which were to be addressed.

The conclusions reached in this Chapter are attempts to answer these questions.

This process will be attempted in two parts. In the first there will be a general discussion of the 'lessons', what they are and where they arose. The second will be the production of a set of recommendations for future action in relation to social inclusion.

### **Definition**

Logically and perhaps chronologically for this study the first imperative is that those who are going to promote what for Government, nationally and locally, is the key concept of social inclusion have some clarity about what it means. It is apparent that there are a number of definitions and understandings of inclusion

and exclusion in the literature. Is the concept synonymous with poverty or is it about having not only resources but also the broader social capital to allow and enable citizens to fully participate in and contribute to society? These issues of definition are crucial to deciding what needs to be done, in what ways and to, and perhaps with, whom to promote inclusion. The current Government has only recently come to and published a firm definition of it. It seems to have adopted the broader definition of exclusion and moved away from what might be described as the early European concept which was broadly equated with poverty. As suggested earlier, discernible themes in the writings on the subject are that:

- it is about more than poverty
- it exists over time
- it is about access to money but also to other resources which we all take for granted as part of society e.g. participation in politics, social activities and employment.

New Labour's definition of exclusion which offers the best yardstick against which to judge the Government's progress on this matter is:

"Social exclusion is typically defined as a process of long-term non participation in the economic, civic and social norms that integrate and govern the society in which an individual resides. Therefore, in theory, attempts to capture the ways in which education contributes to social exclusion should seek to capture the ability of different population sub groups to participate in a number of key dimensions of social activity."



This definition embraces the already referred to multifaceted nature of exclusion, its need for a context and its dynamic nature over time.

### **Communication**

Secondly there is a need to communicate and consult fully with all parties about any attempt to alleviate social exclusion. It was apparent when conducting interviews as part of the case study, that there was very little knowledge and understanding, albeit in a sense anecdotally, that people in schools were contributing or were expected to contribute to the Council's or Government's drive for inclusion through its work on the four areas of exclusions, attendance, early years and childcare and support for parents. This is not to suggest that they did not know about (although this was almost universally the case with the 'parenting' strand) these aspects of the Council's work. However, it seemed that they saw these as separate policy thrusts about, for example, raising standards and not part of any Social Inclusion Strategy. More significantly, there is evidence in the literature (Riley 2003 p72) that ownership of a strategy by those expected to contribute to it is a strong predictor of its success. The same general point, about the need to gain ownership of strategies by key players, could be made to national Government about its Strategy to deal with exclusion.

### **The Growth in Exclusion**

Perhaps linked to this, it is clear that there is at least a tension, if not a contradiction, between various strands of Government policy which has not seen a diminution but rather a growth in exclusion. In a sense this is, as we have seen earlier, part of the legacy of the history of policy making and practice since 1976.

An emphasis on individual achievement at the expense of some notion of common good and society has been carried through from Conservative to New Labour Governments. Critics of this state of affairs (for one of the most vehement condemnations of it see Kingdom 1992) argue that the promotion of school standards through compilation of achievement league tables is at odds with the notion of inclusion. Indeed, one of the results of this tension between standards and inclusion was the rise in the number of school exclusions in the 1990s and into the new millennium. This fits with the more general evidence about the growth in social exclusion. Over the period 1979 - 1990 the number of families on or below 50% of the average income grew from 9% to 24%. At the same time the poorest 20%'s share of national income fell from 10% to 6%.

### **Combating Exclusion**

Nevertheless it is clear that social inclusion is, as one commentator put it, one of, if not the, defining concept of the current Government. It has in a pragmatic way identified a number of proxy factors for exclusion and associated levers it wishes to pull to promote inclusion. The potential causes of exclusion are, as we have seen, many and varied. The proxy factors which Government has sought to address at different levels include:

- poverty
- poor education, in particular that of looked after children
- engagement of parents
- limited work experience
- offending
- attendance



- school exclusion
- poor basic skills
- poor health

Its commitment to this agenda is apparent particularly in its Sure Start policies and the massive input of additional resources into early years and childcare. While, therefore, it would be wrong to say that the Government sees education, as some have done, as 'the answer' to the problem of exclusion, it does clearly regard it as a very important, if not the most important, weapon in its armoury in this battle. Furthermore, through its Children Act 2004 it appears to acknowledge and to be trying to pull together the inclusion and standards agendas and reconcile the tension between them. Under the banner 'Every Child Matters' it is intending to restructure services for young people and families, partly at least, to ensure that education, health and social care resources are joined together to improve the life chances of all children in large part through education but particularly those at most risk of exclusion from school and society. However, sadly some educationalists seem to want to revive the standards versus inclusion debate. This is graphically illustrated and summarised in an article in the Public Agenda Section of *The Times* (p9) on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2004. Those, it suggests, in the Health and Social Care fields are concerned that the inclusion agenda will be lost in the new arrangements. While the rights or wrongs of this particular case have yet to be settled, the general point - that policies, local and national, need to be clearly aligned to ensure that both their direction is clear and that they all push in the same direction - remains valid and important in this context. The Government seems to be acknowledging this within the Children Act agenda.

## Agency

The issue of 'agency' is referred to in the 'history' of social inclusion. It is about who decides to 'include' individuals or groups and actions taken to make that happen. It is suggested earlier that there may be individuals or communities who do not wish to be part of what might be termed the mainstream of society, including the normal educational offering. Examples of this might be travellers, different minority ethnic groups or indeed a group that is sometimes termed 'white working class boys', seen as the new disenfranchised, non-achievers at school and cut off from the 'goods' in society. The issue for government, local and national, is whether it forces, in French terms 'inserts', these people and groups back into society. This issue has particular resonance at the time of writing these conclusions just after the London bombing of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005. There is a very open debate occurring about whether particular religious or ethnic groups should be encouraged more strongly to be part of mainstream society and, in some way, signal its commitment to it. This would be a significant shift away from successive Governments' support for a multi-cultural society.

Finally for this list there is the issue of evaluation. This does not figure amongst the original list of research issues but it may be worth offering some observations on this issue given the findings in Chapter 4. It presented a short critique of the Council's own evaluation of its Social Inclusion Strategy. It did not appear to be well grounded in theory and did not provide lessons for future action other than to suggest two priorities for its next stage. In summary, it was about what had happened in relation to a basket of social inclusion indicators over the lifetime of the Strategy and said nothing about why or how things had got better or worse. The reflective inquiry was intended to be a part antidote to this conclusion. Its



main outcome was to illustrate the difficulty in undertaking evaluations with limited resources. Its own conclusions were also of little general value. However, the broader issue is the extent to which government, central or local, undertakes appropriate evaluation of its work and acts upon its conclusions. The history of evaluation in an earlier chapter indicates that evaluation as a discipline has a relatively short history. Government, perhaps driven by election timetables and, indeed, the desire to be re-elected has found relatively little enthusiasm for evaluation. This is changing and it is appropriate to (almost) finish this study by referring to the Government's own evaluation of its Social Inclusion Strategy published in September 2004. Somewhere along the way Government has found a 'taste' for evaluation, evidenced amongst the four hundred 'plus' research projects referred to earlier, either finished or in train, sponsored by the DfES. It is to be hoped that Government of whatever complexion is able to take the time to reflect on the value of research and respond positively to its conclusions.

In summary, therefore, the policy recommendations which arise from this study are:

<u>Recommendations</u>
1. Before embarking on any policy initiative define key terms. This is particularly important if they are key concepts for Government or any organisation
2. Ensure that all partners who are necessary to the success of any policy are engaged in its development and implementation

3. As part of 2., all parties should be consulted with and communicated with on policy issues as a matter of course.
4. For social inclusion the issue of agency, whether it is 'optional' or an 'expectation', should be clarified
5. Ensure that all policies are aligned to avoid contradiction and to support achievement
6. Evaluation needs to be undertaken as a routine part of the policy development and implementation cycle. Lessons learned from it should be used to make changes to future policy or practice direction

These are recommendations which are applicable to national and local Government. However, they are equally significant for the author of this thesis in his current working life. Reference to this is made below.

**Finally**

Inevitably the scope of this study has been fairly limited. It has resulted in a set of recommendations for action which can be shared with the various policy makers in the system. However, each of those recommendations could equally be seen as a piece of work, or perhaps a set of interconnected pieces of work, for a researcher or researchers to take further. As indicated more than once in the preceding paragraphs, the recent passing of the Children Act 2004 (some time



after this study started) has propelled inclusion to the top of Government's agenda. At present each of the 150 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in the Country is being 'left' to work out how best to address it through change programmes. The author is leading one of these programmes.

It will help him in his role (and perhaps others in similar roles) in at least three ways:

- by encouraging the change leader(s) to be clear about definitions of key terms such as inclusion when setting off on what will be a long journey. If they do not know what it is they are intending to achieve, how will they know when they have achieved it? As already indicated above, also need to be clear about the status of inclusion: how 'optional' or 'obligatory' is it?
- by emphasizing the need to build evaluation into any change programme. Local Government, it has been suggested above, does not have a strong tradition of evaluating its work
- by emphasizing the need to try, however difficult it sometimes is, to establish links between action and effect. It is going to be even more important to make those links in support of the Every Child Matters agenda if we are to be clear that we are making progress on it. The Education Act 2004 stresses the need for an improvement in outcomes for children, young people and families. There will be a need to quantify and calculate progress in this matter.

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**Sample letter and Questionnaire for Illustrative Case Study**

412063  
2063  
Jim Fitzgibbon

JTF/SY/Social Inclusion Strategy

16<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Dear

**Evaluation of the Education Department's Contribution**  
**to the Implementation of ..... County Council's**  
**Social Inclusion Strategy**

In 2001 ..... County Council published its first Social Inclusion Strategy. It was underpinned by a statement of intent:

"We acknowledge that vulnerable individuals and groups of people can be excluded from the society in which we live. Such exclusion can take many forms and more commonly is associated with barriers to, or inaccessibility of, services provided by organisations such as the County Council. We are committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure that our policies, plans and practices are inclusive to all within our society."

The Council's Cabinet agreed that the Education Department's key contribution would, not surprisingly, be in relation to learning. More particularly it would focus on:



- school exclusion
- school attendance
- early years and childcare provision
- improved literacy and numeracy levels
- the availability of parenting support

As part of my studies for an Ed.D at Warwick University I am attempting to evaluate the success of the Education Department's attempts to achieve its targets in relation to four of these areas of its work. It will be important to decide whether it has achieved its intended outcomes. However, it is intended also to identify factors which may have contributed to their achievement and barriers which may have hindered it. This will, it is hoped, produce some key learning points for future development of .....’s and others’ Education Social Inclusion Strategies. The Chief Executive of the County Council and the County Education Officer have given me permission to approach you with this questionnaire.

It would be enormously helpful in shaping future action to have your responses to the questions in the attached questionnaire about the success of the Department's strategies and how they have been implemented. For the initial closed question in each section please tick the statement with which you identify most strongly. For the others please take as much space as you wish to express your views. The questionnaire looks long but follows the same pattern for each subject heading.

Any responses you make will not be divulged to any other party in a way which will allow you to be identified as their source. I will ensure that all respondents receive a copy of my summary of conclusions.

I enclose a prepaid envelope for you to return the completed questionnaire by 13<sup>th</sup> February. Alternatively, if you would like an electronic version of it please let me know at [jimfitzgibbon@.....gov.uk](mailto:jimfitzgibbon@.....gov.uk).

Finally, please accept in advance my thanks for your help in what I hope will be a valuable piece of work.

Yours sincerely

Jim Fitzgibbon

Assistant County Education Officer

Encs





**Evaluation of the Education Department's Contribution**  
**to the Implementation of ..... County Council's**  
**Social Inclusion Strategy**

**Infant and Primary Schools**  
**Questionnaire**

**Contact details**

Name of respondent:

Address:

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

1. **School Exclusion**

The numbers of exclusions from .....’s schools just prior to the publication  
of the Strategy and over its life have been:

	2000	2001	2002
Fixed	1519	1934	1954
Permanent	84	96	93

(a) Do you agree that the Authority has been successful overall in its attempts to reduce school exclusions?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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(b) **Action 1: Training for school staff on behaviour management.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to a reduction in or containment of exclusions?



- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 2: Production of “Raising the Profile on Behaviour” and revamping Behaviour Support Plan. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to a reduction in or containment of exclusions?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 3: Revamp of PRU, including the Primary PRU. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to a reduction in or containment of exclusions?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 4: Establishment of Area Behaviour Panels.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to a reduction in or containment of exclusions?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 5: Establishment of professionals meetings for pupils at risk of exclusion.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to a reduction in or containment of exclusions?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 6: Specific support to some schools.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to a reduction in or containment of exclusions?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices of 1-5.

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(c) Which actions taken by schools have contributed to any reduction or containment of exclusions? Please give reasons for your choice of actions.

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(d) (i) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to exclusions have been either more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(iii) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to exclusion have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(v) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to exclusions have been either more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐



(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(e) (i) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to exclusions have been more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(iii) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to exclusions have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(v) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to exclusions have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(f) Examples of additional resources allocated to the LEA and to schools to help achieve its targets are:

- LEA - the PRU budget: currently c£3m
- Schools - Standards Fund Pupil Retention Grant

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Do you agree that resources to prevent or contain exclusions have been used well:

- by the LEA?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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• **by schools?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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(g) Please list any actions by other agents (the Government, parents, other statutory or voluntary organisations) which may have hindered or helped to reduce or contain exclusions. Please give reasons for your choice of actions.

• **helped**

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- .....
- hindered
- .....
- .....

Attendance

Over the period of the Strategy the figures for school attendance have been:

	2000	2001	2002
Authorised Absences	6.05%	6.25%	5.98%
Unauthorised Absences	0.45%	0.42%	0.4%
Overall Attendance	93.5%	93.33%	93.62%

(a) Do you agree that the Authority's strategy to improve school attendance has been successful?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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(b) **Action 1: Providing targeted financial support for individual schools (30 in total).** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in attendance by pupils?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 2: Undertaking attendance audits in schools with ‘low’ attendance to review processes and procedures.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in attendance by pupils?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐



- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 3: Establishing attendance panels as pilots in schools with 'low' attendance.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in attendance by pupils?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 4: Establishment of the multi agency 'out of school' groups to target support.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in attendance by pupils?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices of 1-5.

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(c) Which actions taken by schools have contributed to any improvement in attendance? Please give reasons for your choice of action.

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(d) (i) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to attendance have been either more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐

- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(iii) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to attendance have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(v) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to attendance have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(e) (i) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to attendance have been more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐



(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(iii) Do you agree that actions taken by schools in relation to attendance have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(v) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to attendance have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(f) Additional resources have been allocated to schools to help achieve targets, for example:

- schools - short term funding of £15,000 for some schools with ‘low’ attendance.

Do you agree that existing or new resources to improve attendance have been used well:

- by the LEA?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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• **by schools?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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(g) Please list any actions by other agents (the Government, parents, other statutory or voluntary organisations) which may have hindered or helped to improve attendance. Please give your reasons for your choice of actions.

- helped

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- hindered

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3. Early Years and Childcare

Over the life of the Strategy the levels of provision for three and four year olds and for childcare have been:

**% of three year olds accessing funded nursery provision**

Year	LEA places	NEG	Population	%
2000/01	2588	634	6140	52.5%
2001/02	2588	1622	5659	74.4%
2002/03	2588	2354.8	5718	86.4%

N.B. Three Year Old Nursery Education Grant was introduced in 2000/01 and funding has been gradually increased each financial year until we reach universal funding in 2004/05.

**% of four year olds accessing funded nursery provision**

Year	LEA places	NEG	Population	%
2000/01	693	1311	6117	32.8%
2001/02	693	1361	6140	33.5%
2002/03	693	1400	5659	37.0%

N.B. As Four Year Old Nursery Education Grant is available to children the term following their fourth birthday, approximately two thirds of the four year old population will have started Reception and therefore will not be counted in these figures.

Numbers of childcare places

Year		0-2 yrs	3-4 yrs not In Early Education	Wrap- around 3-4 yrs	5-8 yrs	Places under 5 yrs	Places 0-8 yrs	Places 8+ yrs	Out of School Hours	Source
2000- 2001	Childminding places	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	
	Setting Places	1323	1408		191	1922	n/a			Early Years Childcare Audit 2000
Total 2000- 2001										
2001- 2002	Childminding places					3488	4043			Early Years Childcare Audit 2001-2002
	Setting Places					1512			2269	Early Years Childcare Audit 2001-2002
Total 2001- 2002						5000				
2002- 2003	Childminding Places	2035	14	6	1803	(a+b) 2049	(e+d) 3852	298	(c+d+g) 2107	Early Years Childcare Audit 2002-2003, ChIS and Ofsted Weblink data August 2003

	Setting Places	1821	2206	1533	3098	(a+b) 4027	(e+d) 7125	1401	6737	Early Years Childcare Audit 2002-2003, ChIS and Ofsted Weblink data August 2003
Total 2002- 2003		3856	2220	1539	4901	6076	10977	1699	8843	

NB:			
Places may be full-time or part-time			
a,b,c,d 2001-2002 Figures collected in different format for DfES	h) 2001-2002 Section 1c lists OOS as 1976, Question 7 in the Audit totals 2269, therefore assumption made that figures indicate capacity	b) 2002-2003 Childminding places for 0-2 yrs could also be taken by 3 and 4 year olds	h) 2002-2003 Settings: Registered places c,d and g are occupancy figures 6032

(a) Do you agree that the Authority's overall strategy to expand early years and childcare provision has been successful?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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**(b) Action 1: *Establish Childminder Tracking reports* – set up to see why the target was not being met, and to monitor the different stages of the process. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in early years and childcare provision?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 2: *Publish Early Years and Childcare Business Handbook* – a resource for providers across the region to help them manage their business more effectively. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in early years and childcare provision?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 3: Conduct ..... Parents Survey – the purpose of this survey was to ascertain parents'/carers' experiences of current childcare services and what barriers they had experienced. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in early years and childcare provision?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 4: Revised Nursery Education Grant leaflets – as a result of ..... Parents Centre working with parents. The purpose of the consultation was to develop a communication strategy for the NEG leaflet: assessing the language format and style of existing leaflets and develop new leaflets which are clear and concise, to plan for the NEG changes and develop ideas to encourage more parents to take up nursery grants. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in early years and childcare provision?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

**Action 5: *Revise forecasting procedures* – this has been revised to take into account trends such as sessional uptake, population figures, the impact of universal nursery education etc. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to an improvement in early years and childcare provision?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices of 1-5.

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(c) Which actions taken **by schools** have contributed to any increase in the amount of nursery provision and childcare. Please give reasons for your choice of action.

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(d) (i) Do you agree that actions taken **by the LEA** in relation to early years and childcare have been more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(iii) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to early years and childcare have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐

- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(v) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to early years and childcare have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?  
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- negatively?  
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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(e) (i) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to early years and childcare have been more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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(iii) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to early years and childcare have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?



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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(v) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to early years and childcare have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐

- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

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- negatively?

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Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

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(f) Additional resources have been allocated for nursery provision and childcare by central government and the LEA, for example:

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
• LEA	£1,500,000	£1,600,000	£1,650,000
• central government	£1,700,000	£2,700,000	£3,600,000

Do you agree that resources to increase amounts of early years and childcare provision have been used well?

• by the LEA

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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- **by schools**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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- (g) Please list any actions by other agents (the Government, parents, other statutory or voluntary organisations) which may have hindered or helped to increase the amounts of nursery provision and childcare. Please give your reasons for your choice of actions.

- helped

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- hindered

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4. Support for Parents (Funded)

The number of LEA funded centres providing support for parents (includes Sure Start) has been as follows over the term of the Strategy:

	2000	2001	2002
Number	6	6	6

(a) Do you agree that the Authority’s strategy to improve support for parents has been successful?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐

- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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**(b) Action 1: Development of Audit of need in 1997.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to any improvement in support for parents?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.



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**Action 2: County Policy established March 1998 as a result of Audit.**

Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to any improvement in support for parents?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

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.....

**Action 3: Partnership working with voluntary sector and, in particular, NCH and schools (.....). Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to any improvement in support for parents?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

.....

.....

.....

**Action 4: Closer interagency working with Social Services to develop centres. Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to any improvement in support for parents?**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐

- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

.....

.....

.....

**Action 5: National Conference April 2002 to raise profile of support for parents.** Do you agree that this action by the LEA has contributed to any improvement in support for parents?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices of 1-5.

.....



.....

.....

(c) Which actions taken **by schools** have contributed to any improvement in support for parents? Please give reasons for your choice of action.

.....

.....

.....

(d) (i) Do you agree that actions taken **by the LEA** in relation to support for parents have been more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

-        positively?

.....

.....

-        negatively?

.....

.....

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for  
your choice of 1-5.

.....

.....

.....

(iii) Do you agree that actions taken **by the LEA** in relation to support for  
parents have been more or less effective with boys/girls?

-        1.        Strongly agree        ☐

- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

.....

.....

- negatively?

.....

.....

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

.....



.....

.....

(v) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA in relation to support for parents have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

.....

.....

- negatively?

.....

.....

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

.....

.....

.....

(e) (i) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to support for parents have been more or less effective with some minority ethnic groups than others?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:

- positively?

.....

.....

- negatively?

.....

.....

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

.....

.....

.....

(iii) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to support for parents have been either more or less effective with either boys or girls?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐



- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:

- positively?

.....

.....

- negatively?

.....

.....

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

.....

.....

.....

(v) Do you agree that actions taken **by schools** in relation to support for parents have been more or less effective with pupils with special educational needs?

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

(vi) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

- positively?

.....

.....

- negatively?

.....

.....

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices.

.....

.....

.....

(f) Examples of additional resources allocated by the LEA and others to support for parents are:

- LEA LEA Officer time
- others staff time

Do you agree that resources to increase support for parents have been used well?

- by the LEA

- 1. Strongly agree ☐



- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

.....

.....

.....

• **by others**

- 1. Strongly agree ☐
- 2. Agree ☐
- 3. Disagree ☐
- 4. Strongly disagree ☐
- 5. Other ☐

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choice of 1-5.

.....

.....  
.....

(g) Please list any actions by other agents (the Government, parents, other statutory or voluntary organisations) which may have hindered or helped to increase support for parents. Please give reasons for your choice of actions.

- helped

.....  
.....

- hindered

.....  
.....

Finally please indicate with a tick (✓) in one of the boxes below whether you would be willing to be interviewed for no more than 40 minutes as a follow up to your responses.

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the prepaid envelope enclosed by 13<sup>th</sup> February 2004 to: Mr J Fitzgibbon, Assistant County Education Officer - .....  
.....



Alternative Questionnaire Format

d. (i) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA and schools in relation to exclusions have been more effective with some minority ethnic groups than others? Please tick <u>one</u> box for 'LEA' and <u>one</u> for 'School'.		
	By LEA action	By School action
1. strongly agree		
2. agree		
3. disagree		
4. strongly disagree		
5. other		
(ii) Which minority groups do you think have been affected:		
- positively	By LEA action	By School action
- negatively	By LEA action	By School action
Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices:		
	For LEA action	For School action

(iii) Do you agree that the actions taken by the LEA and Schools in relation to exclusions have been more effective with boys/girls? Please tick <u>one</u> box for 'LEA' and <u>one</u> for 'School'.		
	By LEA action	By School action
1. strongly agree		
2. agree		
3. disagree		
4. strongly disagree		
5. other		
(iv) Which group(s) has/have been affected:		
- positively	By LEA action	By School action
- negatively	By LEA action	By School action
Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices:		
	For LEA action	For School action

(v) Do you agree that actions taken by the LEA/schools in relation to exclusions have been more effective with pupils with special education needs? Please tick one box for 'LEA' and one box for 'School'.

	By LEA action	By School action
1. strongly agree		
2. agree		
3. disagree		
4. strongly disagree		
5. other		

(iv) Which groups of pupils with special educational needs have been affected:

	By LEA action	By School action
- positively		
- negatively		

Please add any comments you would like to make about the reasons for your choices:

	For LEA action	For School action





CATEGORY		NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT									
<b>2. EXCLUSIONS</b>									
• Inclusion Strategy helpful								1	1
• Statistics not conclusive								1	1
• Statistics indicate containment						1	1	1	3
• Statistics indicate a downward trend				1					1
• Number of exclusions increased			1	1	3	3	1		9
• Feel things are better but figures indicate otherwise			1					1	2
• Rate of increase reduced				1					1
• Boys an issue					3	1	1	2	7
• No difference between boys and girls			1		2	2			5
• LEA help with girls significant						2			2

CATEGORY COMMENT	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
• Lack of LEA work with girls hindered					1	1		2
• Legislation helped				1	1			2
• Working with parents helps		4		3	1	3		11
• SEN parent partnership helped		1		2	1			4
• Lack of parental support hinders		1						1
• Behaviour management panels help			2	1	3		1	7
• Connexions helped					1	1		2
• Lack of access to services an issue			1		2			3
• Resources an issue				8	5		1	14
• Lots of resources put into this area							1	1
• Providing 1:1 in schools helps		1						1



CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• BME pupils an issue				1	1		1	3
• BME not an issue in relation to exclusions				1				1
• BME pupils are less likely to be excluded				2				2
• ADHD and autistic pupils an issue				1				1
• Need for a strategy around travellers							1	1
• Extra support from LEA helps		1	2	6	2		1	12
• ICSS work helps					1			1
• Lack of EP support an issue				1				1
• LEA (or other) documents and systems have little positive impact			1	1	1		3	6
• Clear procedures and policies from LEA help				3				3

CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• PRU support helps			1	8	4		4	17
• PRU 'jammed'					1			1
• Better understanding by schools of pupil needs helps				1				1
• SATs hindered			1	1			2	4
• Use of a reduced timetable helps		1						1
• Nurture groups help			1					1
• More work needed with school refusers							2	2
• Schools are better with children with 'delay' and social skills issues		1			2			3

CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• Exclusion a societal issue					1		1	2
• Exclusion is a school management issue				10	15	2	4	33
• Not making sufficient demands on schools to reduce exclusions							1	1
• Early intervention helps		1						1
• DfES guidelines unhelpful							3	3
• TELAC work helped							1	1
• Out of County placements wasteful			1					1
• Schools find it difficult to target resources on exclusions			1					1
• Working with other agencies difficult					3			3



CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with other agencies better</li> <li>Working with other agencies necessary</li> </ul>				3		1	2	6
							2	2

CATEGORY		NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT									
<u>3. ATTENDANCE</u>									
• League tables hindered								1	1
• Schools help to address through own systems			2		4	10	1	1	18
• LEA systems unhelpful					2				2
• LABSS & EPS helped					1				1
• Work with ESWs helps		1	1	3	4		2		11
• Lack of ESWs support hinders				1	2	4	1		8
• ESWs standard paperwork helps			1		1			1	3
• The Prime Minister taking his children out of school for holidays has hindered			1						1
• Helped that this has become a national issue				2	2	1	1	1	7

CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• Travellers an issue							1	1
• Helped that police target truants					1		1	2
• Socio economic factors are a hindrance		1		1				2
• Ethnicity not an issue				1				1
• Boys an issue				1				1
• Positive impact on BME pupils					1			1
• Gender not an issue			1	1				2
• Work with parents helps		1	1	2		1		5
• Lack of parental support an issue				2		2		4
• Secondary (v. primary) ethos							1	1



CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• Need to focus support on the relatively small number of non-attendees			1					1
• Multi agency work important			1	1			1	3
• Resources an issue			1	1				2
• 'Family holidays' not helped			1	3	1		1	6
• ESWs interviews not helped			1					1
• Work with Social Services helpful						1		1
• Inter-agency work helpful							1	1

CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
4. <u>EARLY YEARS</u>								
• Resources helped	1	4		1			3	9
• Money helped		3		1			2	6
• SureStart Nurseries helped				1				1
• NOF helped	1	2						3
• Neighbourhood nursery money helped	1							1
• BME communities EMAG funding a help				1				1
• Use of surplus accommodation helped		1		1				2
• Differential impact on boys				6				6
• Unable to comment on differential impact	2							2

CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• Differential impact on low earners		1		3				4
• Unaware of significant resources directly to schools	1							1
• Early Years Team helped		1		1			1	3
• Partnership with LEA vital		1						1
• Lobbying for resources helped							2	2
• Liaison between pre-school and school important				1				1
• Working with other agencies helped	1			1				2
• Schools addressed needs of own communities	2							2
• Believe had differential impact on travellers		1						1



<div>CATEGORY</div> <div>COMMENT</div>	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Believe had differential impact on SEN pupils</li><li>• Believe had differential impact on BME communities</li><li>• Linking nursery and childcare important for success</li><li>• Involving parents helps</li><li>• Schools offering selves as models of good practice helps</li></ul>	1  1 1	4  1	  1	6  4  1 1			1	11  6  1 3 1

CATEGORY		NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT									
5. <u>'PARENTING'</u>									
• EMAG staff helpful				1	1				2
• No EMAG support		1							1
• Work of Community Education helped			1						1
• Children's Fund helped				1					1
• Little outreach work, only in centres funded by LEA		1			2				3
• Extra resources for nursery schools helped		1							1
• Lack of resources an issue			1						1
• Disappointing number of Parents Centres not increased			1		1		1	1	4

CATEGORY COMMENT	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Believe schools involving parents on SEN issues has helped</li> <li>Boys respond better when parents involved</li> <li>Work with parents helps</li> <li>Engaging some BME parents difficult</li> <li>Researching needs of BME parents important</li> <li>Pupils with disabilities, learning difficulties, speech difficulties and hearing difficulties have been helped</li> <li>Families for whom English is a second language have benefited</li> <li>ICSS work vital</li> <li>The Parents Centres work well</li> </ul>	1	1  1 1  1	  1 2	3  6   1  2				4  4  8 3  1  3   1  1 1



CATEGORY	NURSERY	INFANT	JUNIOR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	SPECIAL	OTHER	TOTAL
COMMENT								
• Need for more money for SEN		2						2
• SATs a problem			1					1
• Working with other agencies helps		1	1				1	3
• Working with other agencies difficult				1		1		2
• Important to raise profile of this work		1						1
• Local college support for parents helps				1				1
• Employment of a parenting co-ordinator vital							1	1
• Lack of Social Services resources hinders progress							1	1
• More support needed for Afro Caribbean parents							1	1
• Need to include most vulnerable							1	1

## Interview Schedule

### Introduction

**N.B.** emphasise thanks and anonymity

#### **1.** Purpose of research:

- to confirm which parts (or all?) of Council's Social Inclusion Strategy (SIS) have been successful
- to identify why and how any success has been achieved (critical success factors)

#### **2.** Description of SIS:

- its aims
- its components

#### **3.** Areas of questioning

Depending upon which 'phase' of education interviewee comes from, all/some of:

- Overall knowledge of Strategy
- Exclusions
- Attendance
- Early Years
- Parenting

**4. Topics for questions:**

**(a) Overall knowledge of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy**

**(b) Some of the conclusions so far**

**- Exclusions:**

- national agenda (but league tables and changes to exclusion procedures)
- lack of resources (but would schools spend them on potential excludees)
- use of money for residential placements
- BME not seen as an issue (4-6 times more likely to be excluded)
- boys not seen as an issue (5-1 times more likely to be excluded)
- different views on LEA support, systems processes (primary helpful, secondary less so)
- behaviour problems solved 'in school'
- work with parents not important
- view of work with other agencies

**- Attendance**

- national agenda (but league tables)
- resources an issue in relation to ESWS
- structures and processes of ESWS unhelpful
- school intervention most significant
- work with parents important /not important (but term-time family holidays)



- importance of inter-agency work
- Early Years
  - the importance of a national interest in the area )
  - the differential impact on some groups ) agree
  - the importance of new resources ) or not?
- Parenting
  - general lack of resources )
  - the differential impact of the resource ) agree
  - disappointment at the lack of expansion of the ) or not?
  - number of parent centres )

In order to make the process manageable within the time available both for the interviewer and interviewee, it was decided to both limit the number of interviews undertaken and, wherever possible, the number of topics covered in each interview i.e:

- three primary (one infant, one junior and one primary): Early Years, Parenting and Attendance
- three secondary: Exclusion, Attendance, Parenting
- the two officers: all topics
- the representative of the parent support organisation: all but understanding if she wished to focus in on particular areas
- the representative of the voluntary sector: all but understanding that she might wish to focus in on particular areas

5. Style of questioning:

- share general conclusions about each *focus of the Strategy*
- ask if they agree with conclusions
- if so 'why'/if not 'why'

N.B. Emphasis on eliciting 'why, how' success was achieved.

Conclusion

6. Anything else like to say not included in interview so far

Offer copy of final conclusions

Re-emphasise anonymity

Thanks

**Sample Note of Meeting with Interviewee**

**Note of Meeting with ....., Headteacher of**  
**.....on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004 – as follow-up to**  
**completion of questionnaire about County Council's Corporate Social**  
**Inclusion Strategy**

Thanked ..... for both completing questionnaire and for agreeing to meet.  
Emphasised anonymity of both questionnaire return and content of meeting.  
Asked also if willing to have interview recorded. However, in the event recorder would not work and took notes.

Confirmed that the purpose of the research was to identify which part of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy had been successful and to identify how and why success had been achieved.

Confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was to share some of the tentative conclusions which the research so far had come to and to test with ..... whether she agreed with those conclusions or not. She should feel able to say whether she agreed with the conclusions or not or that she had no opinion on the matter. She should also feel free to say whatever else she wanted to say in relation to the four areas which Education sponsored in the Social Inclusion Strategy.

**Exclusions**

**(a) Background**



Indicated that 34% of respondents believed that this aspect of the strategy had been successful. This broke down into 47% of primary schools and 27% of secondary schools believing that the strategy had been successful.

Indicated that respondents had indicated that factors which had supported success of the strategy had been:

- the fact that inclusion was on the national agenda (but balanced by a view that league tables militated against this matter).
- LEA support (training, the revamp of the behaviour support plan, and the establishment of at risk of exclusion meetings) had also been positive and helpful in achieving this part of the strategy.

Things which have militated against the success of the strategy or at least not supported it were:

- work with parents which was not regarded by respondents as significant.
- the way that significant amounts of money had been spent by the LEA on residential placements, supposedly wastefully.
- a general lack of resources.

A general overall conclusion had been that the work of schools was more significant than anything that the LEA could do in this area or indeed had done.

(b) ..... response

For her school any support that she had received from the LEA had been helpful but in a sense too late. LEA staff were out of touch with the chalk face. In its work the LEA placed too much reliance on paperwork. Internal measures within the school were significant: the LEA caught up later. In her case school exclusions went down dramatically as a result of the measures she undertook. A consistent behaviour policy within the school was significant. Sound overall practice in relation to behaviour was also very significant. However, she believed that there was also a time and a place for *exclusions*. *In contrast to the conclusion I had presented from the questionnaires* ..... believed that working with parents was very important if schools were to achieve success with youngsters with behaviour problems. She believed also that residential placement was sometimes the only option for some children.

As far as hindrances to the success of the Strategy were concerned, she agreed that league tables were a problem, particularly for schools in her situation. .... has a history of attracting more difficult youngsters. However, in the more recent past it has a more balanced intake. Nevertheless, some parents were deterred from placing their children in schools which were perceived to have high levels of special needs or where there were perceived behaviour problems. . .... did believe that a general lack of resources was problematic. If she was to work on the issue of inclusion, she had to take resources from other areas of work in the school such as promoting high standards. In relation to children with behaviour problems there was a need for smaller group work. Although, as indicated previously, she believed that residential placement was necessary for some young people, she did believe that one to one provision could, in most cases, avoid residential placement.

## Attendance

### (a) Background

I outlined those matters which respondents to the questionnaire had indicated supported improved attendance, namely:

- the fact that attendance was on the national agenda (but, on the other hand, league tables militated against good attendance).
- audit to review processes in individual schools had been helpful.
- work with parents had also been helpful (although some people believed this was not the case).
- inter-agency work had supported good attendance.

Factors which had proved a hindrance to the achievement of this strategy were:

- a general lack of resources for the Education Social Work Service.
- the structures and processes of the Education Social Work Service.

Overall there was, as had been the case with the issue of exclusions, a view that the work of schools was more significant than anything that the LEA could do.

### (b) ..... Response



..... was very clear that a major issue with a significant proportion of her students, particularly those who might suffer from poor attendance, was that families simply were unable to cope with the normal routines of life. Therefore work with parents for her was very important in achieving good attendance.

Matters which hindered her drive to improve attendance within the school were a lack of power or influence over the work of the Education Social Work Service with parents. Sometimes the support of the Education Social Work Service was vital with parents to emphasise the legal framework around attendance and to give an indication of the importance of children attending school regularly. There had been mixed support from colleagues in Social Services. Some Social Workers were excellent: others were 'rubbish'. Meetings with Social Workers were long and slow. Sometimes feedback from the meetings was a long time coming: sometimes it didn't occur.

## Early Years

### (a) Background

I indicated that 60% of respondents had agreed that the Early Years Strategy had been a successful one. This figure rose to 87% with primary schools.

Factors which respondents had indicated as supporting the Strategy were the national interest in Early Years & Childcare and substantial new resources which had been injected into the provision. Respondents have not been able to identify generally any factor which hindered or had not helped the Strategy.

### (b) ..... Response

..... agreed that the fact that the Strategy was well resourced, well funded and on the national agenda were supportive to its success. If all strategies had been that well funded, there would be no problem.' However, the success would not have been achieved without LEA support. She could identify nothing which might have hindered or not supported this strategy. In her words, given the resources that the Strategy enjoyed, it should have been successful.

## Support for Parents

### (a) Background

I indicated that 38% of respondents believed that this Strategy had been successful. This rose to 60% when considering only primary schools.

Respondents had indicated that working in Centres with colleagues from Social Services and other agencies had been a significant factor in its success. Factors which had hindered or not helped the Strategy were lack of resources and lack of expansion of the provision.

### (b) ..... Response

..... agreed that schools working with parents on, for example, literacy skills were very important. She had worked with the Community Education Service on a family literacy project. Of five parents who had come on board with the project two were moving on to train to become teaching assistants. In her view targeting of support for parents was vitally important. When working with another agency to provide support for parents, she was certain that a lack of targeting had ensured the failure of the project. Overall ..... believed that there was a need to do more to support parents in things such as modelling

behaviour and providing learning role models. The bits of support she had seen from the LEA were excellent but they were not sufficient. .... final comment was a reinforcement of her view that the one thing which had militated against any form of inclusion had been the establishment and continuation of the league tables for schools.

I thanked ..... again for her support, indicated that I would write up the report and send a copy of it to her. She indicated that she had enjoyed the interview and found it very helpful. She would welcome a copy of the report.

S.I. Interview (9.6.04)



.....

6/6/04

### Exclusions

- (a) Supported: LEA staff out of touch with chalk face.  
Too much reliance on paperwork.  
LABBS - helpful, but too late.  
Head commitment very important to give lead.  
Internal measures significant: LEA caught up later.  
Exclusions went down dramatically. However, a time and a place for exclusion.  
Consistent behaviour policy in school. Said practice in relation to behaviour.  
Parents: working with them vip.  
Residential only option for some children.
- (b) Hindered: League tables a problem and contradict inclusion.  
Lack of resources: had to take from standards – need for smaller group work.  
One to one could avoid residential.

### Attendance

- (a) Supported: Families/parents can't cope with life work with parents vip.

- (b) Hindered: Lack of power/influence of ESWS with parents.
- Sometimes support from ESWS vital to emphasise legality.
- ( Mixed support from Social Services.
- ( Some excellent and others rubbish.
- ( Long and slow meetings with S.S. Slow to feedback.

### Early Years

- (a) Helped: Resources, well funded, national agenda, if all that well funded, would be no problem.
- Could not have happened without LEA support.
- (b) Hindered: Nothing.
- Ought to be successful.

### Parenting

- (a) Helped: Schools working with parents e.g. literacy skills – 2 (of 5) moving on to be TAs.
- Targeting important (Community Ed).
- (b) Hindered: Need to do more to support parents; modelling behaviour and as learning role models.
- Bits of support seem excellent.

### League Tables





Area and Conclusion Group of Respondent	Primary and Junior Heads	Secondary Heads	Special Head	Parent Representative	Council Officers	Voluntary and Community Sector/ Governor	TOTALS Y N ?
3. <u>Early Years</u>							
a) Supportive							
- national agenda	Y Y ? ? Y ?	? ? ?	? ?	Y	Y Y	Y	7 0 7
- resources	Y ? ? Y Y ?	? ? ?	? ?	Y	Y Y	Y	7 0 7
b) Contrary (or irrelevant)							
- none !	? ? ? ? ? ?	? ? ?	?	?	? Y	?	1 0 13
4. <u>Support for Parents</u>							
a) Supportive							
- working in interagency Parents Centres	Y Y Y Y Y ?	? Y ?	?	Y	Y Y	Y	10 0 4
b) Contrary (or irrelevant)							
- lack of resources	Y Y ? ? ? ?	Y ? ?	Y	Y	Y Y	Y	8 0 6
- lack of expansion of Centres	? ? ? ? ? ?	Y ? ?	Y	Y	Y Y	Y	6 0 8

**KEY:**

Y = Agreed with the comment

N = Disagreed with the comment

? = No clear view expressed